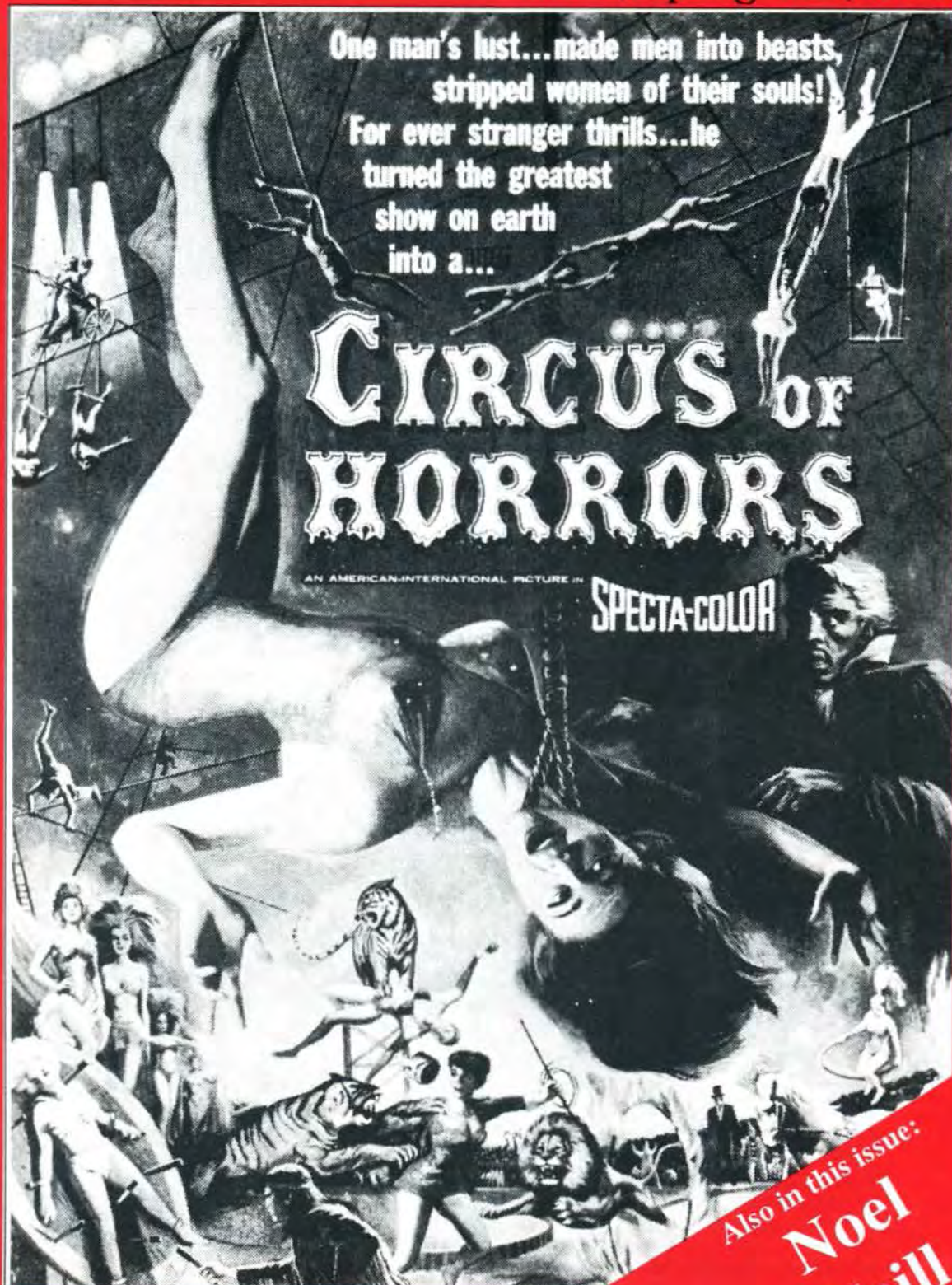
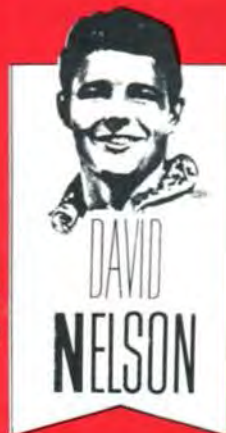
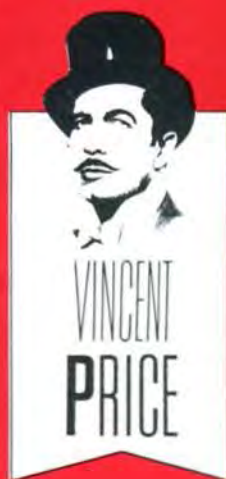


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No. 6/Spring 1992/\$4.95

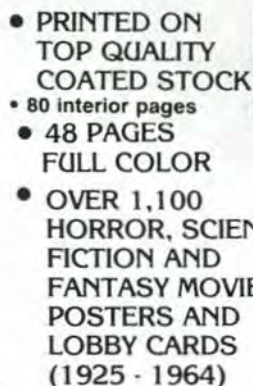


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Scarlet Letters

A very late but an emphatic "thank you". Love your magazine *Scarlet Street*. I lived and worked through the times you write about; naturally, I devoured #3. It was delicious. *Scarlet Street* is addictive. Future issues will keep me up nights, but what the hell.

I was surprised to see the prominent display you gave my comments and stories about Charles Laughton. I'm honored to be included in an issue with that genius. I was in MAN ON THE EIFFEL TOWER with Laughton, which was shot in Paris, France, in 1948. I could do a book on that experience. There's a picture for one of your issues—a truly scarlet movie.

Bill Phipps
Marina Del Ray, CA

I would love a copy of the interview, if it's not too much trouble to send.

Wishing you a very happy New Year.
Edward Hardwicke
London, England

Happy to oblige. Any friend of Sherlock Holmes is a friend of ours.

I just wanted to drop y'all a note to say what a fine magazine you have. You have a good balance of both mystery and horror. One never seems to outweigh the other. I also enjoy the listing of upcoming movies and TV shows.

Your anniversary issue was a good two-day read. I would like to see more interviews with some of the other Avengers, Honor Blackman most of all. I would also like to see a good article on TWIN PEAKS, something about how good it was and what went wrong. Remember how good the first season was? Anyway, keep up the good work. I know you will.

John Kenmore
Mableton, GA

I picked up a copy of your marvelous magazine in Murder One in central London. You've produced a magazine with just the right mix of horror, mystery, and suspense, and I look forward to getting future issues.

May I draw your attention to a club that I help run? The Saint Club was formed in 1936 to provide a constructive fandom for the Saint. It's run today with the help of Mr. Charteris, who keeps a keen eye on our activities. We produce various items of merchandise (sweatshirts, notepaper, and, in the near future, some mugs) and any money we can make goes to a

nominated Saint Club charity. We usually donate money to the Arbour Youth Centre in East London, but last year we donated to two different causes: Simon Dutton—the third television Saint—completed a 400-mile non-stop cycle ride in Norway for charity. Also, we've discovered a gentleman in Spain who runs a monkey sanctuary that looks after chimps who are mistreated by people trying to make money. He works as an offshoot of the International Primate Protection League, and his name is Simon Templar.

Ian P. Dickerson, Hon. Secretary
The Saint Club
London, England

For further information on *The Saint Club*, see this issue's classified section.

I was delighted to hear that *Scarlet Street* is planning a feature on Vincent Price. Mr. Price has now reached "venerable" status. He has conquered the stage and screens large and small on all continents for three generations. I have a lovely personal memory of Vincent Price that I would like to share with your readers:

It was the middle 1950s, and I was a theatre student at Northwestern University. Our summer advanced acting class was to be enriched by a series of celebrity lecturers. Three weeks into the quarter, we

WANTED: MORE READERS LIKE...



Bill Phipps



had variously seen a "hot" Hollywood director who was rapidly cooling, and an aging New York ingenue with a precarious grip on reality. We were just coming off a week-long psychological mauling by Lee Strasberg. Our confidence in ourselves and our chosen profession was not high.

The next scheduled celebrity canceled, and it was announced that Vincent Price would be our substitute, for one session only. We were intrigued. Some knew Mr. Price from his 40s Hollywood leading-man days. Some knew of his critically acclaimed New York stage appearances. Some knew him only as the star of 3-D high camp horror movies.

The day came. He was late. He was very late. The class got testy. Some left; most stayed. When the door of Annie May Swift Hall banged open that summer afternoon, in charged one of the brightest, funniest, and most charming gentlemen I have ever met. Vincent Price sat down with 20 people he had never seen before and made us feel we were important in his life. Of course we talked theatre and film. The first he loved, but did the other because it gave him the ability to collect the art he loved as much as he loved the theatre. We talked philosophy, literature, politics, cooking, and more theatre. Mr. Price looked at us—each one—and talked to us, not at us. He was wonderful. His dynamism affirmed us all.

I will always remember that summer afternoon. Theatre people are an insecure lot. Mr. Price made every one of us believe that what we wanted to do with our lives was valuable, necessary, and fun, and that the desire to illuminate the human condition in a performance medium was an important way to define one's life.

I have no recollection of who made up the balance of the celebrity guests that summer. But I will never forget Vincent Price, and, I wager, neither will the millions to whom he has given such pleasure over the years.

Christine Billies

Tenafly, NJ

Michael O. Yaccarino's exclusive interview with the great Vincent Price, plus an analysis of 1965's *TOMB OF LIGEIA*, will be featured in *Scarlet Street*'s summer issue.

Photo: Helen O'Neill

Thank you for your publication. I found it very interesting and most enjoyable.

I do have some questions, since you are keeping an eye on the happenings on BBC television: Are there any plans to make more of the CAMPION series? Has any of the CAMPION series I and II been released on tape? If not, is there any chance that they might be in the near future?

Keep up the good work.

Sandra Buck
Morrill, ME

Sixteen hours of CAMPION have been completed. According to Rebecca Eaton, Executive Producer of MYSTERY!, there are no plans for further episodes. As yet, none have been released on video.

✉

I feel obligated to acknowledge that your magazine is the best thing to come along in a long time. The only quality magazines that have remained on the market are *Midnight Marquee*, *Little Shoppe of Horrors*, *Phantasma*, and *Filmfax*. I really do not count *Cinefantastique*, as they rarely cover the golden age of horror and sci-fi (though they are quite exceptional in their depth of research during the rare times they do). Of particular interest are the interview-type articles you do, which are interviews on the lesser-known personalities of the classic genre. You see their faces and hear their voices in many films, but there is always a desire to hear more about them.

Please accept my best wishes for continued success. In the words of the venerable Vulcan, "Live Long and Prosper."

Gary A. Pasternack
Glastonbury, CT

✉

In reference to the continuing Universal/Hammer debate, I believe that those on the Hammer side are missing a very important distinction. Hammer's best movies are great horror films, but Universal's best horror films are great movies. Sure, both studios put out their share of clinkers, but, as the largest movie studio in the world, and with an incredible work force in front of and behind the cameras, Universal was able to produce horror films that are cinema classics regardless of their genre. They are highly regarded, not only by horror aficionados, but by those who love cinema.

Ronald F. Tremblay
Rye, NY

✉

The Universal/Hammer debate piece was well-written by both contributors, though it seems to me that the whole thing is rather pointless. Both studios made films both good and bad, and both featured the style of filmmaking that was typical of their era. Despite their historical settings, both will seem ever more quaint to modern viewers as filmmaking techniques change, just as film stocks change, pacing changes, styles of acting change. To me, it is far more productive noting what makes the

good films good, and why mediocre films fall short, rather than playing "my group is better than yours, nah nah." I mean, it's an unfair comparison to begin with, considering that the best of the Universal classics were "A" films and Hammer always had to get by on "B" budgets at best.

I highly enjoyed the interviews with Patrick Macnee and Christopher Lee, and I hope you will continue to feature this calibre of material.

For what it's worth, tell Jessie Lilley that McCoy said "He/she's dead, Jim" in several episodes, and there never was much debate about that. The line that's apocryphal is Kirk saying, "Beam me up, Scotty." Also, I believe it's "Redjack" with a "k", not "Redjac". At least, that's the way I've seen it.

Anyway, keep up the good work and I'll be looking forward to future issues!

Dennis Fischer
Paramount, CA

The spelling of Redjac was confirmed in The Star Trek Compendium by Allan Asherman (Pocket Books, 1986). An interview with Redjac himself, John Fiedler, will appear in an upcoming issue of Scarlet Street.

✉

I was very happy to find your magazine on the racks recently.

My main interest in your magazine is Sherlock Holmes—and most particularly the Granada Series with Jeremy Brett and

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Edward Hardwicke. I loved the two interviews, and was delighted to hear that they plan to produce more episodes! I also enjoyed the review of the Sherlock Holmes video *THE SOLITARY CYCLIST*. Incidentally, I thought it was very clever how you managed to work in a picture of Sir Cedric Hardwicke (page 26: *THE INVISIBLE MAN RETURNS*) in the same issue as his son, Edward Hardwicke.

I also enjoyed the *STAR TREK* review, and the interviews with Barbara Hale, Patrick Macnee, and Christopher Lee.

With regards to your editorial on page 13, I must say I disagree. As Edward Hardwicke said (in a television interview), each generation produces an interpretation of Sherlock Holmes that is understandable and pertinent to their audience. Witness the patriotic Rathbone Holmes, the radical, iconoclastic Holmes of *THE PRIVATE LIFE OF...*, the melodramatic and theatrical Holmes of Gillette, and the Jeremy Brett Holmes of today. Each generation has said that their interpretation was the best, most true, most realistic and believable, etc. This is a valid judgement, because each generation has its own outlook, its own priorities and concerns. If Granada downplays cocaine use by Sherlock Holmes, they are indeed remaining true to Conan Doyle. But also, considering the problems with drug use in our generation, I believe it is equally valid that they view

the cocaine use with a contemporary interpretation of our understandings and concerns. I don't think this is pandering to the viewers' sensibilities, nor do I feel that the producers are weakly buckling under some heavy-handed censor. It is, rather, a responsible and thoughtful response to the current problems and interpretations of today's real life.

The editor calls for "more—not less—films, books, and magazines that are aimed at, not children, but adults". Good grief. Has he attended a movie theatre lately? Or studied a magazine rack or bookstore recently? It is hard to find anything that has been "neutralized" for a child's viewing. I submit that the vast majority is already aimed, with extreme sensationalism, toward an adult audience. Few films edit their contents—unless specifically geared for a children's audience. Being responsible with regard to content should not be confused with boorish, ignorant censorship. I feel that the editor's outrage is both over-reactive and misplaced.

Well, enough of venting my spleen! I look forward to receiving the next issue of *Scarlet Street*!

I like all the nice photos you've chosen—very good.

Margo Sundberg
Roseville, MN

Your FRANKLY SCARLET piece in issue #5 is right on target. Far too many TV pro-

grams are or have become "child resistant". Could this be one of the reasons for the network drop in viewership?

Adults should not be deprived of their right to enjoy programs with a mature theme or outlook because children may be watching. Parents who are uncomfortable with something their children may be watching have the most powerful form of censorship within reach—the on/off selector. Not everything is suitable for all ages, and it is the parent's responsibility to impose guidelines within their family.

If we allow others to impose their beliefs and standards on us, who decides what standards to use? Enough concessions have been made and safeguards are in place to protect the children.

One of the joys of being an adult is being allowed to make your own decisions on what to watch or read. Let's not lose any more of that now.

Mary Dreyer
Bogota, NJ

Keep up the good work with *Scarlet Street* magazine. I especially liked the Chris Lee interview in *Scarlet Street* #5, though after reading many previous interviews with Lee, nothing new of interest was stated. Most of his interviews are about the same anyway. I also liked your feature on Patrick Macnee, who, since *THE AVENGERS*, has gone somewhat

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unnoticed. His portrayal of John Steed was and is part of British and American culture. I'll look forward to getting more issues of *Scarlet Street* in the future.

Stephen K. Jones
Silver Spring, MD

Thanks for a wonderful issue #5 of *Scarlet Street*. I loved the BATMAN RETURNS preview and the interview with Jack Larson. I was especially happy to see the brief write-up by the News Hound about the upcoming TWIN PEAKS movie (now postponed until September 1992) and the serialized PEAKS follow-up short story in *Power Star*; you see, I'm the author of that story. For readers who are also PEAKS fans, I'm pleased to inform you that *Power Star* is continuing the adventures of Agent Cooper and company beyond the cliff-hanging resolution of which the News Hound spoke; there are now a total of 11 short stories based on TWIN PEAKS that either have already appeared or will appear within the next year in *Power Star*.

Kimberly A. Murphy
Laurel, MD

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8 SCARLET STREET

All members of our society, you can be sure, will use your interesting magazine as reference material for our bibliographic and filmographic studies, and it will be included in our lectures on the best literature of its type.

Thank you for your attention and interest in our projects.

Benicjusz Nycz
Klub Filmowy
Bielsko, Poland

While I am a devoted fan of *Scarlet Street: The Magazine of Mystery and Horror* and treasure each copy, I look upon my subscription as more of a business investment, for I know that each issue can only increase in value over the years.

However, since I am an old lady on Social Security (and who knows how long that will last), if you receive more requests for sold-out back issues—I'm sure you will—would you please be kind enough to give them my name.

Thank you.
Frances M. Staniloff
Hackensack, NJ

Check out the classified advertisements on page 85.

I just found out about your magazine with issue #5, and am enjoying it immensely! Your articles are well written, interesting, and very professional. I was es-

pecially pleased to see my friend John Zacherle headlining one of your pieces!

Mike Gilks
E. Quogue, NY

I would just like to take this time to tell you how much I enjoy *Scarlet Street* and hope it continues to provide first-class entertainment for all its readers. Thank you for everything.

Gordon Waddell
Washington, NJ

I very much enjoy your publication and particularly its heavy emphasis on Sherlock Holmes. I have recommended it to the members of my Sherlockian society.

Joseph J. Eckrich, Commissionaire
The Parallel Case of St. Louis
St. Louis, MO

Certainly a critique is but one person's opinion, and I have no illusions that everyone must agree about a film. But I wonder if perhaps a critic who writes about a film such as V.I. WARSHAWSKI, which is based upon a series of novels, shouldn't be required to read a few of those novels as research. If "KGS" had done so, he would have recognized how well in tune the film was with Sara Paretsky's stories, and how perfect Kathleen Turner was while she "walked through" the role. (I wonder if any per-

former ever actually "walks through" a role. Surely this is a disservice to one's fans and a detriment to one's own career. I think, rather, that "walking through" is a phrase critics use to make believe they could be better actors than the one who got the job, when in fact they just can't think of anything more creative to say.)

Charles Durning's brief appearance may have seemed a waste to KGS, but he nevertheless fit the character of Lt. Mallory just fine, stereotype and all, and he got to pay his bills that month.

As an avid reader of V.I.'s adventures, I found the film a very enjoyable realization of some characters I've grown comfortable with in print. It was nice to see them walking around.

Other than that, thanks for a wonderful mag!

Duncan MacBeth
Nutley, NJ

Kevin G. Shinnick replies: *Being a performer myself, I can honestly say that, yes, I have seen actors "walk through a*

part"—that is, not invest their performance with more than the superficial necessities of the character. By the way, "Duncan MacBeth"? Is that a dagger I see before me, or just a review?

Let me simply say how very pleased I am with your publication. Incorporating horror, fantasy, and mystery in one publication is a marvelous idea, which I do not believe has ever been tried seriously before. I also am delighted to see the work of the Brunas brothers and Bruce Hallenbeck available in your pages. They are very talented writers whom I have respected for many, many years.

As a fan and follower of fantasy-film fandom for well over 30 years, it does my heart proud to see a publication such as yours in this day and age.

I certainly look forward to all future issues.

Gary Dorst
Madison, WI

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Our Scarlet Lady

by Scarlett O'Horror

Now, listen up, Scarlet Streeters! The question I've posed for Miss Lois Lane, intrepid girl reporter for a great Metropolitan newspaper, is this: Do you truly want as your main squeeze a man who can bend steel in his bare hands? I mean, isn't it jus' the teensiest bit dangerous? I mean, isn't there a distinct possibility you'll end up starin' your knees in the face?

There's somethin' else I gotta know. Tell me, what do you see in a man who so obviously suffers from a severe emotional disorder, not to say an eclectic clothes sense? Look at it in the cold, clear light of reason. Here you are, literally head under heels in love with Superman, and the big sap's upset 'cause you won't give Clark Kent a tumble. Clark Kent! In other words, Superman! Think of it: You love Supes for what he is (namely, a hunky alien from a planet that's one great big cosmic dust bunny) and Supes is distressed 'cause you don't love him for what he isn't (namely, a four-eyed twit from some hick town in Kansas)! Mercy, it makes me long to sit you down and say, "Honey, are you aware that the man of your dreams is in dire need of professional help?" Seriously, have you ever stopped to think maybe the "S" on his chest stands for "Schizo"?

Nach'ly, the powers-that-be won't let poor I'll me conduct any interviews 'round here, so you won't get such hard-hittin' queries in this issue's Noel Neill interview. (Miss Neill, for those livin' in ignorance, first played Lois in two highly-popular Columbia cliffhangers in the late 40s, then went on to charm us in THE ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN on television.) Still, Miss Neill's got a lot to say, and there's more'n a sprinklin' of juicy gossip in the gab-fest she had with our own Madame Publisher. She's a gracious, warm, and witty lady, so it's with considerable pride that I make Noel Neill, Superman's girlfriend for generations of TV and serial fans, this issue's Scarlet Lady. Miss Neill, I salute you!



Noel Neill

*Scarlet Street,
Thanks - again!
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"Lois Lane"*

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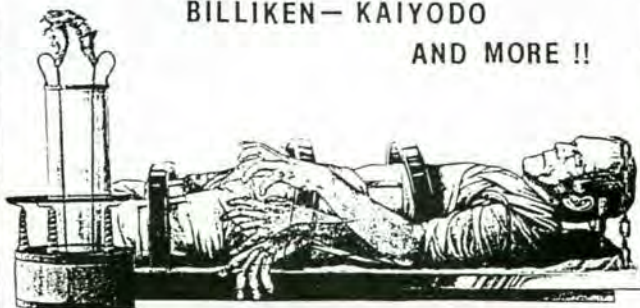
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Boy! What a rush!

We at *Scarlet Street* celebrated our anniversary by getting all our writers and contributors together (as many as were available, anyway) and whooping it up at an indoor Street Party. Dinner, liquid refreshment, good company, and general merry-making was the order of the night, and we hope everyone had a good time. We certainly thank everyone for coming. And certainly, we thank everyone who contributed to the evening's success.

Noted Holmesian David Stuart Davies joins us this issue with an exclusive American review of the latest Granada Sherlock Holmes offering, *THE MASTER BLACKMAILER*. Rebecca Eaton, Executive Producer of the PBS series *MYSTERY!*, confirms that it will air in the States, probably in the '92/'93 season. Of course, we have photos. Mr. Davies also offers mystery news from abroad as we premiere his new column, *OUR MAN ON BAKER STREET*.

There's so much packed into this issue. I think I'll just let you get to it.

Jessie Jolley

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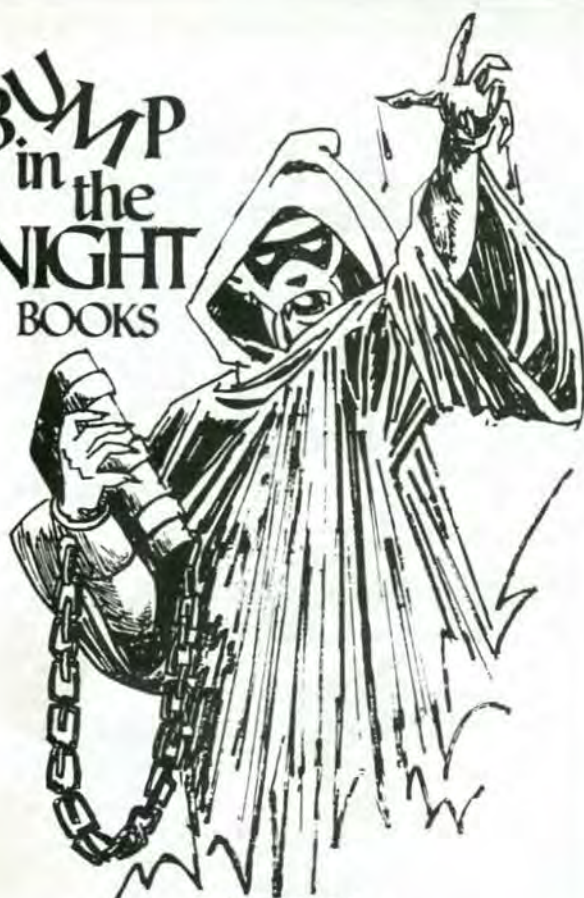
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MYSTERY!

There is no doubt that Agatha Christie is one of the most popular mystery writers of all time, with sales of her crime novels and other works topping 2 billion. Yet there are many critics who complain that her murder mysteries lack the power and scope of—for example—Edgar Allen Poe's stories. Her most popular characters, Hercule Poirot and Miss Jane Marple, are even accused of being nothing more than cardboard caricatures.

Since she's so derided by critics, what makes Ms. Christie so popular? John Mortimer, creator of RUMPOLE OF THE BAILEY, explains: "Her brief sentences and short chapters that whirl her readers along without allowing them so much time for thought, giving them surprises that are never shocks and then puzzles that are never less than ingenious, if sometimes less than fair. It should never be forgotten that one of the functions of the writer is to provide pleasure and relaxation and in this Agatha Christie succeeded."

POIROT returns this summer, beginning July 2 with the two-part PERIL AT END HOUSE. THE LOST MINE, THE CORNISH MYSTERY, and THE DISAPPEARANCE OF MR. DAVENHEIM will follow. Before that, Scarlet Viewers should warm up their VCRs for A TASTE FOR DEATH, featuring P.D. James' Adam Dalgliesh. A six-part serial, it begins its run May 12, continuing through June 25.

Last, but hardly least, actress Helen Mirren is currently working on a sequel to PRIME SUSPECT. The second miniseries will reportedly take place in the black community in London and will deal with racism on the police force.

—Sean Farrell

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Frankly Scarlet



"Sawdust and spangles and dreams..."

Dark, murderous dreams for all you bloodthirsty fans of mystery and horror, but actually my all-time favorite circus film starred—dare I admit it?—Doris Day! When I was a kid back in the 50s and 60s (of the present century), two or three weeks each summer would be spent vacationing with Mom and Dad in upstate New York, Dad's ol' stompin' grounds. We'd fish on Lake Champlain, take in various small-time theme parks called Fairytale Village and Gaslight Village and Wild West Something-or-other, and have cow fights on my Aunt Pearl's farm in Argyle. (Cow fights involved choosing a weapon—namely, a cow—and squirting milk at your opponent.) All very rural and tons of fun, excluding the time I fell and sat on a roll of barbed wire. Anyway, when we weren't "roughing it" on the farm, we'd stay in a peaceful little town called Whitehall, and I'd find myself with nothing to do in the evenings. The solution, naturally, was to go to the movies—the same movie, sometimes six times a week. It was at Whitehall's Capital Theatre, in 1961, that

I spent my nights exploring the wonders of ATLANTIS, THE LOST CONTINENT. (I spent my mornings on the lake keeping my eyes peeled for Atlantean submarines.) It was at the Capital, in 1962, that I hopped a rocket to the moon with Bing Crosby and Bob Hope in ROAD TO HONG KONG, the last of the fun-filled road movies, and joined the circus with Jimmy Durante, Martha Raye, Stephen Boyd, and, yes, Doris Day, in BILLY ROSE'S JUMBO, one of the last of those lavish MGM musicals I loved fully as much as horror films.

The Capital shut its doors 'way back in 1969, as did many shops and stores in the town, but those summers will always be special to me. Last year, when the *Scarlet Street* gang was recuperating from the rigors of getting our first issue on the stands, my thoughts had already turned to the big top and the magazine you now hold in your hands. JUMBO, being negligent in the monster and murder departments, had no place in our pages, but quite a few circus films did, among them THE BIG CIRCUS, CIRCUS OF HORRORS, FREAKS, VAMPIRE CIRCUS, and BERSERK! For good measure, I tossed in some carnival and amusement-park movies, including such dark and devious thrillers as NIGHTMARE ALLEY, THE ILLUSTRATED MAN, NIGHT TIDE, GORGO, and STRANGERS ON A TRAIN. You'll find them in the special SIDESHOW section, which replaces SCREEN AND SCREEN AGAIN this time out.

A few steps from the circus grounds are the majority of our regular features, plus an exciting report on Granada TV's new Sherlock Holmes

spectacular, THE MASTER BLACK-MAILER, from David Stuart Davies (our new British correspondent).

So find yourself a battered bench as close to center ring as possible, grab some popcorn and cotton candy; and watch out for flying knives, falling acrobats, rampaging dinosaurs, ravenous vampires, peripatetic pianos, and the glittery terrors invoked by Clowns at Midnight. The circus is on parade!!!

And heck, here's a shot from JUMBO...

Richard Valley



Doris Day in BILLY ROSE'S JUMBO (1962).



NEWS

BITE

The Mystery Writers of America, Inc. have announced the nominees for the 1991 Edgar Awards. Among them is Jeremy Paul, who won for Best Episode in a TV Series in 1988 for his dramatization of THE MUSGRAVE RITUAL. Mr. Paul is nominated for THE CASE-BOOK OF SHERLOCK HOLMES episode THE PROBLEM OF THOR BRIDGE.

Other nominees include Michael Baker and David Renwick for POIROT: THE LOST MINE, Gary Hopkins for SHOSCOMBE OLD PLACE (from THE CASE-BOOK), Thomas Ellice for DEVICES AND DESIRES, and Ted Tally for the screenplay of SILENCE OF THE LAMBS.

The winners will be announced April 30, 1992. Elmore Leonard is Grand Master.



BAT BEAT

March 22, 1967: The American Broadcasting Company, better known as ABC, televises an episode of its diminishingly popular BATMAN series titled POP GOES THE JOKER. The episode's opening sequence concerns the Clown Prince of Crime (Cesar Romero) invading Park's Gallery and defacing the works of artist Oliver Muzzy (Fritz Feld).

June 23, 1989: Warner Brothers releases its much-anticipated movie version of BATMAN. Since producers Jon Peters and Peter Guber and director Tim Burton have repeatedly announced that their interpretation of the venerable character will in no way echo the campy qualities of the TV show, it comes as a bit of a shock when, midway through the film, the Joker (Jack Nicholson) invades the Fluegelheim Museum and proceeds to destroy the paintings therein.

November 2, 1966: ABC broadcasts a BATMAN episode titled HIZZONNER THE PENGUIN. The plot has that pompous, waddling master of fowl play, the Penguin (Burgess Meredith), run for the office of Mayor of Gotham City against the Caped Crusader himself (Adam West).

Today: Take a gander at these photos from the much-anticipated sequel to Warner's blockbusting BATMAN (\$450 mil' at last count), slated for release on June 19 under the title BATMAN RETURNS. In particular, study the shot of the Penguin (Danny DeVito) firing one of his lethal umbrellas. Take special note of the billboards behind the fine feathered fiend. Let the uninitiated be advised that the Penguin's legal name is Oswald Cobblepot.

Anyone sense a pattern here?

ENTERTAINMENT TONIGHT premiered the BATMAN RETURNS promo last February and I must confess—with reservations—that it looks pretty good. The action scenes appear to be better

executed than they were in the first flick, and there's even a dramatic, low-key shot in which star Michael Keaton looks handsome enough to be millionaire playboy Bruce Wayne and tall enough to be Batman. (Sadly, there's also a shot in which Keaton looks scarcely taller than DeVito!) Michelle Pfeiffer is a gorgeously sleek Catwoman (Selina Kyle to the aforementioned uninitiated), and her skintight costume is a considerable improvement over the dull grey S&M gear currently on display in the comics. (This should not be taken as an indication that, when and if Robin the Boy Wonder shows up on the screen, his outfit should be anything other than the one he first wore 50 years ago.)

So where, as Clara Peller used to growl, is the beef? Well, I'll tell you: the beef is with the bird. Putting aside the gimmicky birds and bumbershoots, the key to Mr. Cobblepot's character is his overwhelming vanity and ego. Sartorially resplendent, with glittering monocle and natty cigarette holder, the Penguin proudly strutted across the pages of *Batman* and *Detective Comics* and the TV screens of the 60s. Thanks, no doubt, to Tim Burton's seemingly insurmountable need to revise the Batman ethos, DeVito's Penguin, at least in the preview, doesn't strut: he wallows. In sewers. In dirty underwear. Sans monocle and cigarette holder (although his campaign posters show him with both items). He's such a foul, filthy, stringy-haired felon that it might have been better simply to rename him the Pidgeon!

That said, I must admit that I'm looking forward to BATMAN RETURNS a lot more since watching the ENTERTAINMENT TONIGHT preview (and, as long as they get the customers, I doubt Warners is terribly concerned over fidelity to DC's classic characters). Now, if I can only forget how similarly excited I was when I caught that preview for STAR TREK: THE FINAL FRONTIER...

—Drew Sullivan



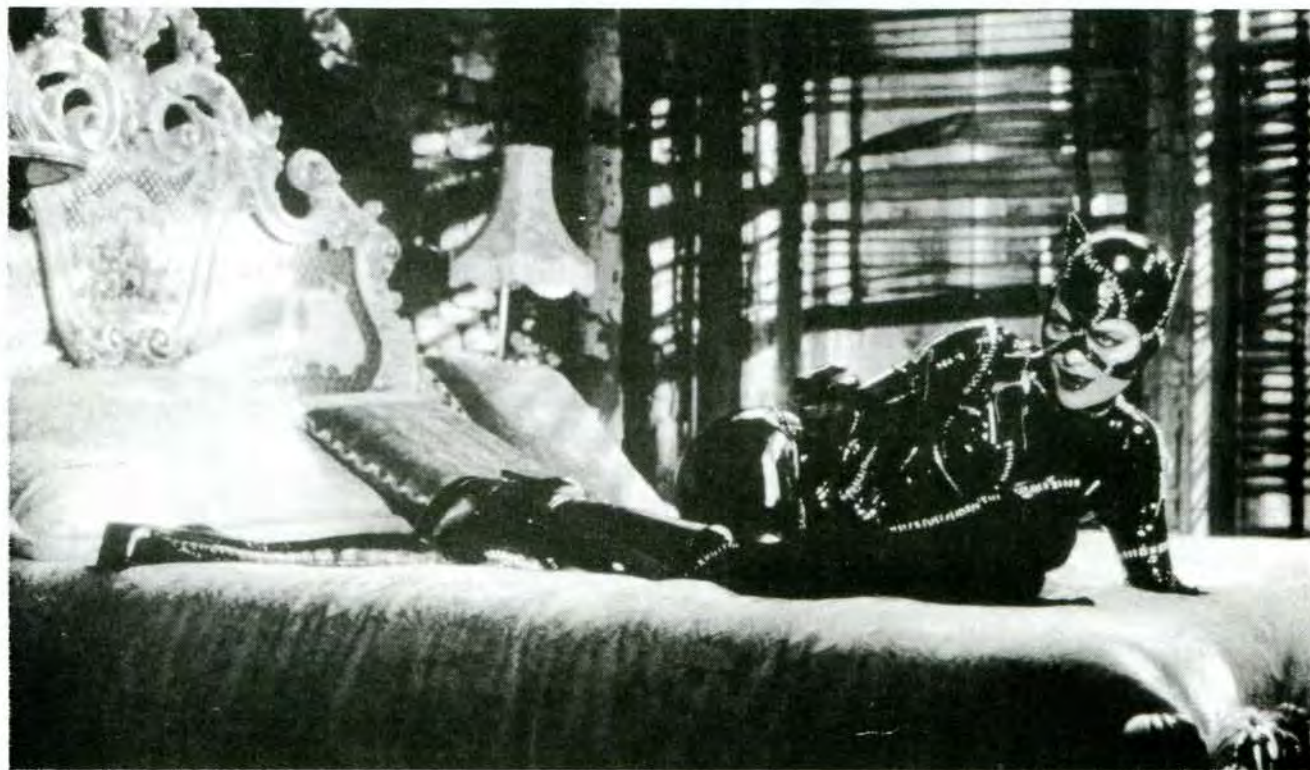
Christopher Walken, an actor who was born to play a denizen of Gotham City, has a prominent role in BATMAN RETURNS.



Michael Keaton



ABOVE: The man who lets a smile—and a gun—be his umbrella. Danny DeVito as Oswald Cobblepot, a radically re-thought version of that veteran villain, the Penguin. BELOW: Wanna see what happens when you let the cat sleep on your bed? Just watch Michelle Pfeiffer strut her stuff as Selina Kyle, the Catwoman.



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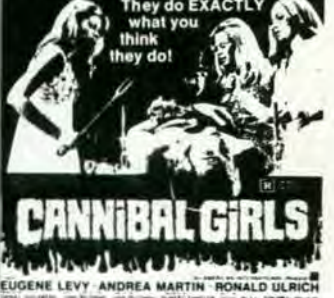
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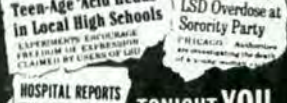
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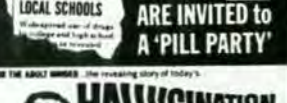
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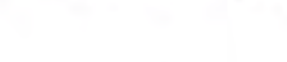
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GORATH
ATOMIC BRAIN AND MONSTROSITY
FANTOMAS
DR. WHO AND THE DALEKS
SPACEFLIGHT IC-1
AGENT FOR H.A.R.M.
FAHRENHEIT 451
JOURNEY TO THE BEGINNING OF TIME
BATTLE BENEATH THE EARTH
LATITUDE ZERO
TIDAL WAVE
BEYOND ATLANTIS
TERMINAL MAN
DEATH RACE 2000
THEY CAME FROM WITHIN
DAMNATION ALLEY
WARRIORS OF ATLANTIS
DEATHSPORT TT56

CLASSIC SCI-FI TRAILERS, vol. 13

PLANET OUTLAWS (BUCK ROGERS)
INDESTRUCTIBLE MAN
THE INVISIBLE BOY
WAR OF THE COLOSSAL BEAST
TERROR IS A MAN AND BLOOD CREATURE
TWELVE TO THE MOON
THE UNDERWATER CITY
WIZARD OF MARS
SOUND OF HORROR
MONSTER A GO-GO
VILLAGE OF THE GIANTS
IT HAPPENED HERE
BRIDES OF FU MANCHU
ISLAND OF TERROR
JOURNEY TO THE FAR SIDE OF THE SUN
MYSTERIOUS ISLAND OF CAPTAIN NEMO
WONDER WOMEN
THE ULTIMATE WARRIOR
LAND THAT TIME FORGOT
FOOD OF THE GODS
RETURN OF CAPTAIN INVINCIBLE
EMPIRE OF THE ANTS
ISLAND OF DR. MOREAU
STARSHIP INVASIONS TT57



Directed by RALPH BAILEY. Screenplay by RALPH BAILEY. Produced by RALPH BAILEY and HARVEY MARKS. Distributed by ANDREW MEYER. (MCA/Universal) 35

Better Holmes and Watson

The Granada Series Reviewed

THE CROOKED MAN
Adaptation: Alfred Shaughnessy
Direction: Alan Grint

"You know, mild adultery has always been commonplace among officers and their wives serving in hot climates," remarks Dr. John H. Watson, late of the Fifth Northumberland Fusiliers, to a friend, as they delve into the likely murder of Colonel James Barclay, very late of the Royal Munsters, by his devoted wife, Nancy.

"Thank you, Watson, for educating me in military morality," sniffs a bemused Sherlock Holmes.

It's a whimsical exchange, and one entirely absent from Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's "The Crooked Man", published in the 1892 collection *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes*. Nor does Holmes, on the printed page, require much educating in matters, moral or otherwise, of a military nature. Most of the story is told by the Great Detective himself when he turns up one evening on Watson's doorstep, long after Mrs. Watson has retired for the night. Granada's TV version dispenses, as always, with Watson's wife and her expository baggage. Here, though, writer Alfred Shaughnessy makes another significant change in the adventure: he involves Watson in the investigation (via the good doctor's military background) from the very beginning. Indeed, it's Watson who

brings Holmes into the case through his request for the Master Sleuth's aid. (Another interesting scripting choice on Shaughnessy's part is his identification of the episode's regiment as the Royal Munsters, the name used in American editions of *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes*. British editions have Holmes solve a case concerning the Royal Malloys).

THE CROOKED MAN takes place in the martial setting of Aldershot, with flashbacks to the Great Indian Mutiny of 1857. This tale of betrayal has more than a slight hint of Rudyard Kipling to it, and the strong element of romance plays well against the cool logic of Holmes. As noted, Granada's Holmes "has no interest in military matters"—is indeed rather snobbish about them—which serves to further alienate him from his current surroundings.

Jeremy Brett and David Burke are in top form as Holmes and Watson, their disparate attitudes toward soldiering making for a little friction in the early moments of the episode. Norman Jones is touching in the title role, and Fiona Shaw (who stole what little was worth stealing in 1991's *THREE MEN AND A LITTLE LADY*) makes a strong impression as a friend of Nancy Barclay. As the Colonel and his wife, Denys Hawthorne and Lisa Daniely add a finely-etched portrait to the Holmesian gallery



Jeremy Brett

of dysfunctional marriages. James Wilby, who went on to star in the Merchant Ivory film of E.M. Forster's *MAURICE* (1987), and later played loving son to Diana Rigg's Mama-from-Hell on last year's *MYSTERY!* presentation of the ironically named *MOTHER LOVE*, appears briefly and wordlessly as the young James Barclay.

In 1944 "The Crooked Man" was voted one of the less-successful Conan Doyle stories by the Baker Street Irregulars, but it's among the best episodes of the filmed series. (Oddly, "The Speckled Band", voted the most successful, is not completely at home on film.) Look for the chilling scene when Jones, lit by lightning, appears at the French windows and the camera cuts ever closer to his tortured face. Hitchcock couldn't have done it better.

—Richard Valley



LEFT: The world's greatest detective (Jeremy Brett) and the physician least interested in the practice of medicine (David Burke) solve the decades-old mystery of *THE CROOKED MAN* (Norman Jones). **RIGHT:** Norman Jones as Corporal Henry Wood of the Royal Munsters.



Our Man On Baker Street

A Glut of Gumshoes

Since Christmas, British television has been swamped by detectives. First we had the histrionic Jeremy Brett as Sherlock Holmes, chasing THE MASTER BLACKMAILER 'round his safe. This was followed by David Suchet as the impeccable POIROT in three splendid two-hour films: THE ABC MURDERS; ONE, TWO, BUCKLE MY SHOE; and DEATH IN THE CLOUDS. As usual, the programmes excelled in production values and period detail, but they were so much more interesting than the previous series featuring the Belgian sleuth, which had used only the rather dull short stories. By utilising the Agatha Christie novels with their wide array of characters and labyrinthine plots, and giving them two hours' screen time, the mysteries had a chance to breathe and engage. Also, it's pleasing to relate, they were darker in tone, the thrills and chills having more bite.

POIROT was followed by VAN DER VALK, who someone once described as Maigret with clogs on. This series, featuring the Dutch sleuth, first appeared on British television in the 70s and was revived last year to some acclaim. Again the format is that of the two-hour movie, giving the viewer a chance to get to know the characters and weigh up the mystery while taking in the tourist shots of sunny Amsterdam and its environs. Barry Foster, who plays Piet Van der Valk, has his own theo-

ries regarding the renewed success of the Dutch detective: "It is a programme for grown-ups who are not afraid to use their brains. He is the kind of detective who admits to reading a book or two, likes opera and poetry and is articulate." (I feel sure that Inspector Morse would agree with him.)

Staying on the continent (and with revived sleuths), Granada's new detective "biggie" is Simenon's MAIGRET. This French cop was a great favourite on the BBC in the 60s, when he was played by Rupert Davies (not my dad). Now this £3 million series features Michael Gambon (an actor of some note in Britain, but perhaps not too well known in the States, though he did star in THE SINGING DETECTIVE). Gambon is far from sure whether Americans will take to MAIGRET: "In America all the shows are fast and furious. Maigret is slow and cautious, taking care in everything he does."

The six-part series was filmed in Budapest because it resembles Paris as it was in the 50s—and is much cheaper than Paris in the 90s. Apparently, Michael Cox, the original moving force behind the Sherlock Holmes series, was involved in the planning stage, but pulled out before filming started because of "creative differences". However, Granada are so pleased with the project that they are already planning a second series for next year.

Finally, that Oxford detective whose twin loves are crosswords and real ale, turned up for a new series—the last one, I hear! Yes, INSPECTOR MORSE, the trailblazer in the two-hour detective movie stakes, stepped out once more onto the crime-filled streets of sunny Oxford with his trusty sidekick Sergeant Lewis to ponder over a new set of misdemeanours in the university town. These are glorious programmes. To me they have the charm and enjoyment of a warm bath or a good bottle of red wine. Like all the detective programmes mentioned so far, part of the attraction of the Morse programmes is the character of the detective himself. With John Thaw's charisma, Inspector Morse has become a man that women want to mother and sleep with, and men want to know and share a night's boozing with. This final series, the sixth, features half a dozen stories and, although Colin Dexter (Morse's creator) no longer provides story lines for the screenwriters, he does, Hitchcock-like, have walk-on parts in each episode.

It is interesting to observe the way the television detective has



changed in the last few years. We certainly seem to have moved a long way from the days of the wham, bam, STARKY & HUTCH, freeze-or-I'll-blow-your-head-off kind of show. Holmes, Poirot, Van der Valk, Maigret, Morse—all middle-aged men who tackle their crimes with the 'little grey cells' and not a Colt 45. Perhaps we could do with a few more women to keep them company; at present we have only Miss Marple and Jessica Fletcher.

The Return of Cushing

The gentleman of horror, Hammer great Peter Cushing, is about to embark on what he expects will be his final film. It is to be a TV movie called HERITAGE OF HORROR. The story deals with an old actor who is desperate to play King Lear, but is not taken seriously because he has previously been known only for his horror-film roles. It seems that the movie has been designed so that it can present many clips of Peter's past performances. We wish him well with the venture.

More Holmes

At the time of this writing (mid-February), Granada plan to film at least three more Sherlock Holmes adventures: "The Red Circle", "The Sussex Vampire", and "The Retired Colourman". The scripts have been written and Brett and Hardwicke are now waiting for the go-ahead. Let's all keep our fingers crossed.

—David Stuart Davies



John Thaw as Inspector Morse

CIRCUS OF HORRORS



Take One

No survey of circus thrillers would be complete without at least a perfunctory examination of American International Pictures' CIRCUS OF HORRORS. One has to go back to Tod Browning's melodramas of the 20s and 30s to find a movie that exploits the possibilities of sadism and sawdust as evocatively as this British-made, American-financed shocker. The film, like the circus itself, offers tawdry thrills with a healthy strain of hucksterism; CIRCUS OF HORRORS is probably the nastiest cotton-candy movie ever made. It is every bit as vulgar as the producers set out to make it: the color/scope photography as well as the cheesy production values only contribute to the sense of tastelessness. As to be expected from a big-top thriller by AIP, CIRCUS OF HORRORS owes more to a sideshow than to Ringling Brothers, nudging the prescribed limits of sex and violence close to its fringes, at least by the prim standards of the late 50s.

AIP promoted the picture with another of its hard-sell advertising campaigns, complete with an exceptionally lurid theatrical trailer designed to make the film look even gorier than it actually was. The equally unsubtle poster art faithfully depicted the movie's grisliest scenes in appropriately vibrant carnival colors, highlighted by a full-figured girl in eye-catching circus tights dangling from a hangman's noose. For good measure, the overimaginative artist, harboring an apparent affinity for Hammer vampires, added a toothsome figure in a Dracula cape who doesn't even appear in the film. CIRCUS OF HORRORS was greeted with a mixed reception. The Catholic Legion of Decency

slapped it with a stern "B" rating for "excessive brutality, suggestive costumes and situations", which only served to titillate the thrill-starved teenage market that the Legion was trying to dissuade. The film was a big money-maker, and even enjoyed some critical success, a real rarity for American International.

Letting the audience know it means business, CIRCUS OF HORRORS bursts onto the screen with one of the most harrowing opening scenes ever. A title slide sets the year at 1947. Inside a

cottage in the English countryside, a young woman (whose face is out of camera range) hysterically screams the name "Rossiter" while smashing every

mirror in sight. The film cuts to a car screeching down a nearby highway. The driver, Edward Finsbury, confides to his future father-in-law, Dr. Morley, the suspicion that his fiancée, who disappeared weeks earlier, is hiding in the family country home. The girl, Evelyn, has recently suffered a minor facial disfigurement, which the entire medical establishment—excluding Dr. Rossiter—has diagnosed as not treatable. Convinced

that Evelyn has submitted herself to Rossiter's unorthodox treatments, the two men break into the house, only to find the girl, obviously deranged, with the left side of her face a hideous mass of scar tissue.

As the authorities close in, Rossiter attempts a high-speed

by Michael Brunas



6003-59



ABOVE: Circus owner Vanet (Donald Pleasence) promises to give plastic surgeon Rossiter (Anton Diffring) anything he wants if only he'll fix Nicole Vanet's war-scarred face. Rossiter wants a circus. **BELOW:** Vanet has a final waltz with Bonzo the Dancing Bear as Rossiter watches.



getaway, but only succeeds in running down a policeman and slashing his own face in the ensuing accident. Rossiter's meek assistant, Martin Webb, and Martin's sister, Angela, perform instant plastic surgery on the doctor. The trio make their way to the Continent, hoping to find a new front to continue their experiments.

In France, they stumble upon a run-down circus owned by the drunken Vanet and his little girl, Nicole, whose face was left scarred in a Nazi raid. Rossiter (now Dr. Bernard Schuler) successfully operates on the child and takes over the circus when Vanet is "accidentally" crushed to death by a bear.

Rossiter hits upon the fantastic and rather pointless idea of staffing the circus with criminals, all of whom have suffered some form of facial mutilation, which he surgically corrects before training them as performers. In 10 years he builds the derelict circus into one of the greatest shows in Europe; however, when any of the restored beauties decide to leave, Rossiter, using Martin as his henchman, arranges their "accidental" deaths in full view of the audience. Twelve deaths later, the big top arrives in England. Inspector

Michael Brunas is co-author of Universal Horrors, and has written articles for Filmfax, Midnight Marquee, Fangoria, and Starlog, among others.

Arthur Ames of Scotland Yard, who suspects there's a murderer at work in the "Jinx Circus", goes undercover as a newspaperman covering the show. His questioning of Nicole, now one of the star attractions, convinces him that Rossiter and Schuler are the same man.

Rossiter falls in love with his latest protégée, Melina, whom he is grooming as an animal trainer. This incites the professional jealousy of his earliest recruit, Elissa, who demands top billing. Overhearing Ames discussing the Rossiter case, Elissa attempts to blackmail the plastic surgeon, who responds by planting a boa constrictor in her dressing room. She narrowly escapes with her life, but her luck runs out when Martin makes sure that the rope snaps during an aerial act, plunging Elissa to her death.

Determined to get the goods on "Schuler", Ames enlists the aid of Evelyn Morley (who is still recuperating from her ordeal of a decade earlier) in identifying the doctor. Meanwhile, Angela and Martin, who've been quietly plotting against their less-than-appreciative boss, sabotage Melina's animal act; the girl is mauled to death by lions. Rossiter goes berserk and gets into a tussle with Martin, during which the surgeon accidentally stabs Angela to death. The police arrive, hell-bent on arresting everyone in sight, but Martin manages to spring a gorilla from its cage before he is dragged off to headquarters. Rossiter outruns the constables and even slays the hairy brute with his knife, only to be run down by a car driven by Evelyn Morley.

Having critiqued **HORRORS OF THE BLACK MUSEUM** (1959) several issues ago, this writer approaches **CIRCUS OF HORRORS** with a sense of redundancy. Although the plot lines of both films have little in common, stylistically they are cut from the same cloth. **BLACK MUSEUM** was years ahead of its time in its clinical depiction of violence, but it is usually regarded as a less-than-respectable quickie, a prurient and rather plodding exercise in cinematic bloodletting. **CIRCUS OF HORRORS**, on the other hand, is fondly remembered by followers of the genre.

Both pictures have more in common than a casual perusal of their credits indicates. Producer Herman Cohen recently revealed to interviewer Tom Weaver that he worked behind the scenes of **CIRCUS OF HORRORS** without receiving official credit. Cohen claims he not only acted as executive in charge of production, representing his partners Nat Cohen (no relation) and Stuart Levy, but actually owned a piece of the picture and was often on the set. The producer was invited onto the film at the behest of the "other Cohen" simply because Julian Wintle, **CIRCUS'** official producer,

Continued on page 28



Rossiter, now Dr. Schuler, tries to convince Magda Von Meck (Van-da Hudson) that it will be far healthier not to leave the big top.

Circus of Horrors: Take Two

by Richard Valley

There's a character joke buried deep in the dime-novel splendors of 1960's *CIRCUS OF HORRORS* that's guaranteed to bring knowing, cynical smiles to anyone with even a passing interest in show business. Elissa Caro (Erika Remberg), the one-time hooker/murderess who's risen to fame as the premier aerialist of the Schuler Circus, enters the caravan of Dr. Rossiter (Anton Diffring), the showman/plastic surgeon who's made her a star. Elissa's intentions are not amorous; neither are they bloodthirsty. No, the former knife-wielding streetwalker now has but one overwhelming desire: she wants top billing. That's right, the show-biz bug has claimed another victim. Elissa Caro will be a headliner or die trying.

She dies.

CIRCUS OF HORRORS is, in many ways, the cinematic equivalent of all those lurid 50s paperbacks, the ones with half-nude blondes sprawled lustily across their covers, but what sets it above such catchpenny companions as 1967's *BERSERK!*—what sets it above most non-circus spook shows of the period, for that matter—is the often-surprising manner in which its characters behave. Left to lesser talents, Elissa Caro would remain the vicious, hate-filled underdog she is when first we find her plying her trade. Instead, in the capable hands of writer George Baxt, director Sidney Hayers, and star Erika Remberg, Elissa is transformed by ambition and unsuspected ability (plus a dash of plastic surgery) into a vibrant woman whose behavior, while hardly admirable, is at least different from her behavior in the past.

Character development has never been one of the prime concerns of the horror film. (For every Frankenstein Monster who advances from child to husband to mindless automaton—a natural progression—there are a dozen Draculas whose attitudes are unchanged by the centuries.) In *CIRCUS OF HORRORS*, though, the reactions of the principals, startling in their spontaneity, propel the story as effectively as does the endless string of murders and mutilations. Thus, Elissa, enraged at finding herself relegated to second place on the circus posters, stops to smile as she overhears a tête-à-tête between young Nicole (Yvonne Monlaur) and the man from Scotland Yard (Conrad Phillips). Thus, Rossiter, whose altruistic impulses have long since been crushed by years of bloodshed, is thoroughly taken aback when Nicole says, in daughterly fashion, that she loves him.

In one way, especially, the entire circus troupe behaves untrue-to-form. Rossiter has peopled his company with acrobats, clowns, and tight-rope walkers who, before the surgeon's administrations, were all hardened thieves and killers with unseemly facial scars. Yet not one of them persists in lawlessness once they've learned an honest trade. Elissa's not out for money; no, what she craves is stardom. Magda Von Meck (Vanda Hudson), the stunning equestrienne who doubles in a knife-throwing act,

finds fortune in the arms of a wealthy admirer (Bond veteran Walter Gotell), but genuinely adores the man. Melina (Yvonne Romain) is prepared to enter a lion's cage out of love and gratitude for Rossiter's face-saving abilities. For all the mayhem, the Schuler Circus turns out to be, not only a spectacular show, but a remarkably successful experiment in prison reform—and *CIRCUS OF HORRORS* sails blithely past the timeworn cliché of the big top acting as merely a front for criminal activity.

Rossiter's acts of vengeance against performers who plan to move on to better things are deftly staged and, from the killer's point of view, foolproof. Slip arsenic in someone's cup of tea and it's pretty obvious they've been poisoned. Knife someone while they snore in bed and chances are it won't be labeled an accident. But skewer a human target in full view of hundreds of spectators, and who's going to doubt that it's just one of the hazards of the profession? Circus acts aren't called "death-defying" for nothing; small wonder, then, that death sometimes retaliates. What Rossiter's crimes lack in discretion—and they're sensational enough to christen Schuler's the "Jinx Circus"—they make up for in their apparent inevitability. Poor Scotland Yard! From start to finish, the parade of killings is never actually proven to be anything other than accidental. There's simply no evidence to show otherwise.

CIRCUS OF HORRORS' tawdry virtues are such that it's

possible to make too big a case for the film. In this, it's not unlike the pulp potboilers of such writers as Cornell Woolrich and Jim Thompson. Woolrich's *Night Has a Thousand Eyes* and Thompson's *The Grifters*, for example, written with the sole purpose of earning a buck, have impressed latter-day critics with their narrative glories. Stylistic flaws and deficiencies in plotting are overlooked in the rush to "rescue" a lost classic. Make no mistake: *CIRCUS OF HORRORS* has its fair share of defects. Its performances plummet from the heights of Anton Diffring, Erika Remberg, and, in a minor role, Donald Pleasence, to the depths of



Somewhere in France, Dr. Rossiter meets Elissa Caro, a battle-scarred prostitute.

the Yvonne Monlaur and Romain. (Monlaur repeated her foolish-heroine bit to much better effect in 1960's *BRIDES OF DRACULA*, while Romain, minus dialogue, came into her own in 1961's *CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF*.) Conrad Phillips, a talented actor, is stiff and unappealing as Inspector Arthur Ames of Scotland Yard. Several subplots, including one involving a sad-faced clown, have virtually no payoff. A caged creature that may or may not be a gorilla—but certainly is never referred to as such—is a mystery unsolved. Still, the movie speeds by at such a furious pace that it's as easy to miss its flaws as it is to ignore its virtues. Over 30 years since it first hit neighborhood screens, *CIRCUS OF HORRORS* remains the most garishly entertaining blend of sawdust, spangles, and slaughter ever put on film.



had a background in mostly high-budget Rank productions and seemed like a fish out of water helming so sordid a penny-dreadful.

But penny-dreadfuls, at least of the American variety, were Herman Cohen's stock in trade. The producer left his stylistic fingerprints deeply embedded in the picture, and apparently in the script itself. Cohen's focus was always on the villain, usually bucking the time-honored convention of a standard love interest. As in *BLACK MUSEUM*, the homicides are spectacularly staged and disarmingly brutal. Although *CIRCUS OF HORRORS* contains far less graphic gore, both films have an unmistakable misogynistic streak. Good taste is usually the first casualty in a Cohen movie, but they're seldom boring: his lack of reverence for his characters adds a spark of unpredictability that was a novelty in the 50s. Virtually anything goes in Cohen's pictures, and no character is above being killed off; indeed, in *BLACK MUSEUM* and *KONGA* (1961) every major character is dispatched before the wrap-up.

CIRCUS OF HORRORS' screenplay was penned by George Baxt, who is best known for his mystery novels. The picture is not his proudest achievement. Reportedly Baxt had so little faith in the production that he rejected a percentage of the film's gross in favor of a flat fee (much to his regret, as it went on to turn a tidy profit).

Some critics at the time of the movie's release echoed Baxt's dismal appraisal. The *New York Herald Tribune*'s Joseph Morgenstern summed up his dissatisfaction with a terse "horrible. Not spine-chilling horrible, just horrible horrible." But over at the *New York Times*, Howard Thompson wagged his critical tail most approvingly in a praise-packed review, calling it "the crispest, handsomest, and most stylish shocker in a long time. . . . It projects and sustains an electric tension". Incredibly, Thompson topped off his critique by calling the film "surprisingly civilized."

Seen today, *CIRCUS OF HORRORS* works more on the level of schlock entertainment than as the sophisticated, well-heeled thriller Thompson claimed it to be. Its plot is straight out of a 40s mad-scientist movie, and Baxt's slapped-together, Johnny-on-the-spot construction is often painfully evident. Although one watches horror films realizing that the usual rules of logic should be checked at the door, *CIRCUS OF HORRORS* piles on the absurdities to the point of burlesque. Fortunately, Co-

hen has (for a change) a capable director in Sidney Hayers, who imbues the film with a sheen of calculated, ruthless intelligence. Hayers concentrates on suspense and even gives the villain some dimension, although the lesser characters remain, disappointingly, paper-thin. The only glimmer of humor—a stunt man in a cheap Halloween gorilla suit—is unintentional, but at least Hayers keeps the beast out of camera range as much as possible. (The pressbook synopsis tries to gloss over this embarrassment by referring to it as an "unearthly looking creature of the circus", but what do they know? The bunglers couldn't even get Rossiter's alias right!)

Baxt's script is rife with mayhem, but the mindlessness of the situation keeps coming back to haunt him. As if he were unaware of his fugitive status, Rossiter constantly risks exposure by turning his killings into well-attended public exhibitions, a sure-fire way to attract police attention. He maintains what could only be described as a super-human schedule. Not only does he groom mutilated criminals to become seasoned circus daredevils, in his spare moments Rossiter succeeds in turning an impoverished, flea-bag carnival into a world-class outfit. All the while he is making trail-blazing advances in plastic surgery in his cramped, inadequate circus trailer; his "miraculous" operation on Nicole is performed on a wooden table with no equipment in sight. Miraculous is right!

Much of the nonsense is kept in check by Anton Diffing's velvet-smooth, skillful underplaying of Rossiter. Diffing was presumably cast on the basis of his work in *THE MAN WHO COULD CHEAT DEATH* (1959), Hammer Studio's juvenile but spirited reworking of

the over-literary *THE MAN IN HALF MOON STREET* (1944). The casting

was sensible, if not inspired, and Diffing makes the most of the opportunity. The actor gives the right shadings of ruthlessness, egomania, scientific detachment, and even sex appeal to the role. Diffing handily dominates the film, helped by Baxt's refusal to give him any competition from the other characters.

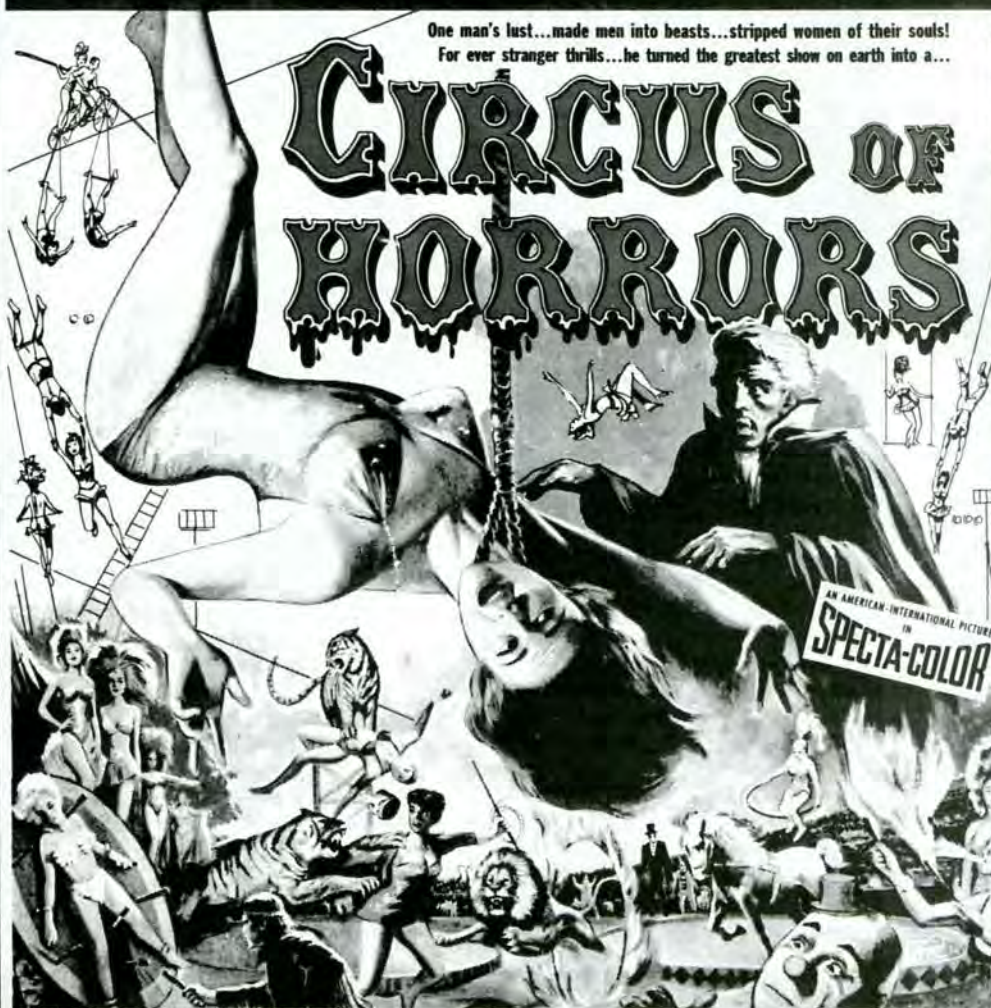


Rossiter (Anton Diffing) has fallen madly in love with the luscious Melina (Yvonne Romain). Naturally, the first thing he plans to do is lock her in a cage with a pack of hungry lions.

SPECTACULAR TOWERING TERROR!

One man's lust...made men into beasts...stripped women of their souls!
For ever stranger thrills...he turned the greatest show on earth into a...

CIRCUS OF HORRORS



SEE ADAM AND EVE AND THE MOST BIZARRE CIRCUS IN THE WORLD—



THE STRANGE THRILLS—THE BEAUTY AND BLOOD OF THE WHEEL OF DEATH.



WOMEN STRIPPED OF THEIR SOULS IN THE TEMPLE OF VENUS.

starring ANTON DIFFRING • ERIKA REMBERG • YVONNE MONLAUR • A JULIAN WINTLE-LESLIE PARKYN PRODUCTION • AND STARRING 200 WORLD FAMOUS CIRCUS ACTS

Rossiter is infinitely shrewder and more magnetic than anyone else in the movie. (The German-born Diffring's accent gives *CIRCUS OF HORRORS* unsettling political implications that the script probably never intended). The rest of the male characters are either total incompetents or weaklings; the females vipers, shrews, or simply bimbos. Rossiter's accomplices, Martin and Angela, are wholly unsympathetic, self-loathing characters. Starting out as the plastic surgeon's right-hand man in the operating room, Martin quickly degenerates into a glum, spineless trigger man. Angela, hopelessly in love with the brilliant psycho killer, falls only too willingly into the role of the woman scorned. Both serve under their master's thumb in silent misery.

If you think the upright, non-villainous characters fare better, think again. Inspector Arthur Ames spends most of his time under the sheets with the more curvaceous members of Rossiter's troupe—"All in the name of duty," he reminds his boss—then watches ineptly as they fall victim to the plastic surgeon's well-devised "accidents". To our hero's credit, Ames does have his suspicions and chides Rossiter about his "Jinx Circus" with its staggeringly high casualty rate, but the intrepid villain brushes aside all comment with authoritative indignation. Scotland Yard more than meets its match in the diabolical Dr. Rossiter; never has a movie murderer had a more cooperative foil.

Rossiter's victims seem almost designed to elicit as little sympathy as possible. The troupe members are all fugitives from the police, with two strikes against them from the outset. Elissa, who is first seen working the streets as a prostitute, is made into such a harpy that her murder doesn't come soon enough. Having barely survived Rossiter's botched attempts on her life, she brazenly announces her intentions to turn him over to Scotland Yard upon completion of her death-defying circus act. Naturally, the plastic surgeon has just enough time to set a lethal booby-trap. It's a stock situation that has turned up in scores of movies and bad television shows, and it's never very believable.

More surprising is the development (or lack of it) of the character of Nicole. In our first encounter, Nicole is sensitively depicted as a child victim of the war, her shrapnel-scarred face the result of a Nazi air raid. In a moving scene, she runs among the circus animals, joyfully showing them her newly-restored face. Nicole is the kind of character who could be expected to mature into the female lead, her innocence preserved relatively intact. Instead, she all but fades into the woodwork (or possibly the sawdust) to become just another bimbo in circus tights.

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SCARLET STREET 29

THREE RING CIRCUS



interviews by Richard Valley

Recently, George Baxt, Sidney Hayers, and Erika Remberg—writer, director, and star of *CIRCUS OF HORRORS*, respectively—met for lunch and a brief chat, via telephone, with *Scarlet Street* about circuses; snakes; Anton Diffring; the Baxt-scripted/Hayers-directed *BURN WITCH, BURN*; clowns; gorillas; and—let's put it delicately—bosoms.

George Baxt: Well, I'm sitting right here with Sidney Hayers and Erika Remberg, who was one of the stars of the film. What do you want to know?

Scarlet Street: Just about everything. How did *CIRCUS OF HORRORS* come about?

GB: It came about because a producer named Julian Wintle contacted my agent, Richard Hatton, and said, "They need a horror film, preferably set in a circus." They wanted lots of beautiful girls with big tits whenever possible. And they were being backed by Sam Arkoff and his partner from American International, right? Off the top of my head I told a terrible story about a circus run by a plastic surgeon who turned criminals into beautiful people. The ones that weren't beautiful became freaks. They said, "Okay, you have a deal," and I almost fainted right in front of them. Sidney Hayers was at this meeting, 'cause he had been an editor for them. This was going to be his first big pic-

ture, and I had no idea that this was going to be a big picture, in color and all that jazz. So I did a draft of the movie, which they hated. And then I rewrote it and what I rewrote became *CIRCUS OF HORRORS*. That began the hunt for the big-titted ladies. We found Yvonne Romain, who is now Mrs. Leslie Bricusse. She's the one who gets eaten up by the lions. And then we found the future Mrs. Sidney Hayers, Erika Remberg. She is the lady who hangs by her neck and who's not afraid of the doctor. And then there was—none of them had big tits, by the way, except Yvonne—then there was Yvonne Monlaur; she was the French girl. And

Vanda Hudson! She was four months pregnant, so we had to kill her fast.

SS: Anyone else?

GB: Oh! And Jane Hylton, dear lady! She died about three years ago. Jane Hylton; she was the other lady. We had a terrific cast. We had Kenneth Griffith, Donald Pleasence—we kill him in the first reel, happily. He got eaten by a bear. It was supposed to be alligators, but we couldn't get alligators, so we fed him to Bonzo—"Hello, Bonzo!"—or Bozo or something. I think it was an eight-week shooting schedule. We used the Billy Smart Circus. We could only have them until, I think, two in the afternoon, because they had matinees. We shot



Erika Remberg gets roped into rehearsing by director (and husband) Sidney Hayers.

Photo courtesy of Sidney Hayers



In *CIRCUS OF HORRORS*, Vanda Hudson is the first to die, for reasons having nothing whatsoever to do with the script.

at Clapham Common; I remember it rained all the time. We were slithering around in mud throughout the entire picture.

SS: You were there for the shoot?

GB: I came as much as possible. We had a leading man, Conrad Phillips, and the star, of course, was Anton Diffring, the never-to-be-forgotten.

SS: Can you tell us a bit about him?

GB: Anton Diffring? He made his first success in *I AM A CAMERA*, with Julie Harris and Shelley Winters. He played the Jewish boy in that. He was in a lot of war pictures. He'd been around for years. And the picture *CIRCUS OF HORRORS* became the big surprise smash hit in America. We had this big hit song! "Look for a Star!"

SS: We were going to ask you about that.

GB: Written by a man named Mark Anthony, believe it or not! And it became a big, big hit record.

SS: Was it written specifically for the film?

GB: Yes. It's Erika's number; she comes out and walks to the rope that she's gonna climb and hang by—as in thereby a tale. Well, the movie opened in Chicago and took in, for those days, an amazing \$100,000 in the first week, and suddenly became top of the bill. It was billed above the picture *ICE PALACE* with Richard Burton.

SS: That's an odd double bill.

GB: It was a very odd double bill. I was in England; I couldn't understand why they were putting those two pictures together.

SS: There seems to be a tongue-in-cheek element to the film. For example, it's the only film we've seen that actually has a sequence begin with the title "Somewhere in France..."

GB: (Laughs) It really wasn't meant to be funny. It was meant to cut the budget and get right to the story. You have to admit, that story moves like a house on fire. The funny one that nobody ever got was with Conrad Phillips. He's watching Erika hanging by her neck and twirling, and he says to Anton Diffring, "It must all be a matter of timing." And Diffring says, "If it wasn't, we'd have to use a different girl every night." (Laughs) I got away with murder with those lines.

SS: As you said, *CIRCUS OF HORRORS* is a very fast-moving film...

GB: Sidney did most of the editing on that film. He just looked at me sternly and said, "I did all the editing on that film."

SS: There seems to be a very interesting ambivalence about the characters. Even Dr. Rossiter has some positive traits. Was that in your original script?

GB: I always try to give them humanity. I always say horror only works if you believe in the people you're watching. In other words, I don't believe in somebody sticking their hand in somebody's chest and pulling their heart out. I mean, there's no horror in *CIRCUS OF HORRORS*. It's all inferred. You don't see anything; the only thing you ever see is the knife sticking out of Vanda Hudson's neck.

SS: And you don't even see that go in.

GB: They cut it. We had it go in, but it was cut by the censor.

SS: Two questions that we've been wanting to ask for years. What is that thing in the cage that looks like an anorexic gorilla?

GB: It was a kind of flop operation of Rossiter's, I guess. Sidney, what was that thing?

Sidney Hayers: What thing?

GB: The thing that finally comes chasing after Anton?

SH: A gorilla.

GB: It was a gorilla.

SS: It was a gorilla?

GB: Yeah. It was a gorilla that missed. (Laughs)

SS: And the other thing we wanted to ask about is the clown who's never seen out of make-up...

GB: In the script, originally, he's disfigured. He takes his make-up off and he's totally disfigured. We cut that.

SS: We want to ask you about *BURN WITCH, BURN*, which you wrote and Sidney Hayers directed. Recently, Richard Matheson claimed you had no involvement whatsoever in writing the script.

GB: Yeah? You tell Richard Matheson I did a complete rewrite from top to bottom! I mean, they couldn't go on the floor with the script they wrote. Matheson's partner, Charles Beaumont, had died at that point. Which is why I get no credit in this country, but on all the prints in Europe and Asia and in all the reference books, it says, "and George Baxt". It was called *NIGHT OF THE EAGLE* in England.

SS: Right.

GB: But, please! I wrote scenes he never heard of! The bridge game! The chase on the bus! The scene where Peter Wyngaard goes out after Janet Blair; that's all my stuff.

SS: Mr. Hayers, how were you and Mr. Baxt reunited for *BURN WITCH, BURN*? Did you call him in to re-write the script?

SH: Yes, he was called in to do some re-writes on it.

SS: We'd heard that June Allyson was originally cast in *BURN WITCH, BURN* and was replaced. Is that true?

SH: No, that's not true.



Mystery writer George Baxt scripted several of the best late-50s/early-60s horror films, including *CIRCUS OF HORRORS* and *BURN WITCH, BURN*.

"We killed Donald Pleasence in the first reel, happily. He got eaten by a bear. It was supposed to be alligators, but we couldn't get alligators, so we fed him to Bonzo..."

SS: So it was Janet Blair from the beginning?

SH: Janet Blair, yes.

SS: Mr. Baxt, you were also involved in writing the story for the Hammer film *VAMPIRE CIRCUS*, weren't you?

GB: I did not write the story; they bought the title.

SS: Just the title?

GB: They paid me £1,000 for the title *VAMPIRE CIRCUS*. I had a great story, but they wanted to go with their own story. They said, "We want the title". So we dickered and dickered and I made £1,000. Not bad for a title.

SS: No! What was your idea for the story?

GB: Oh! It's too involved. I had a dentist who put his drill through somebody's eye.

SH: You've been drinking.

GB: I have not been drinking! I was desperate. I couldn't think of anything.

SS: Just a quick word about your books. You have different series—for example, the celebrity murder series, which includes *The Dorothy Parker Murder Case*, *The Tallulah Bankhead Murder Case*, and *The Alfred Hitchcock Murder Case*. Are you going to be doing more?

GB: I have two more coming out. There's *The Greta Garbo Murder Case* and *The Noel Coward Murder Case*. They're too much hard work. They're easy to write, but they're murder to research.

SS: What about the *Max Van Larsen* and *Sylvia Plotkin* mysteries?

GB: They're gone. That's over with. Nobody wanted the third book.

SS: Mr. Hayers, you used Billy Smart's *Circus* in *CIRCUS OF HORRORS*. Were the acts in the movie written around Smart's performers?

SH: No. The act that my wife performed, which was on the rope, was performed by a woman called Alma Paiea. Her husband swung the rope. Erika, I must say, was very strictly rehearsed as to how to do that. Obviously she wouldn't go up to that height, but at least we got all the close shots of her doing it. As for the lion tamer, obviously we couldn't put a woman in there, so he had to wear woman's clothing. Then, right at the 11th hour, he told us, "I don't know how the lions will react when I get in there dressed like this. They can come over the top of the cage, but if they do, don't run. Otherwise—well, just stand still." That was a fairly daunting experience. Particularly as one of them did get out and everybody just stood there absolutely shitting themselves. But we didn't run. The lion just strolled around while everyone stood there and the roustabout had to get the bugger back into the cage. There were quite a few interesting experiences.

SS: You said earlier that all the editing on the film was your own?

SH: Well, it was started by a fellow called Reginald Wills, who went off on something else. So I went into the cutting room and did it myself.

SS: It's an incredibly fast film. It also has quite a few jump cuts, where most films of the period use dissolves.

SH: Well, I'm one of the products of David Lean. When I entered the business I worked with Lean, and he was trying to get away from that sort of technique. He would talk about direct entry into scenes, "because," he said, "the most difficult thing when you make a picture is to hook the audience with the next scene." He was always picking up the hook, and I sort of fell into it. Of course, it's very common today.

SS: Anton Diffring had a reputation for playing cold-hearted people. What was he like in real life?

SH: He certainly wasn't cold-hearted. I think, being German, he obviously had a rather Germanic view of life. But he wasn't a doomed man or anything like that. In fact, he was a very nice man. I liked him very, very much indeed. He was easy to work with, very cooperative and, I must say, I found him very agreeable. The thing is, he'd been cast as so many SS men and Nazis, that maybe he got a reputation for cold-heartedness, which isn't really very fair.

SS: He certainly is excellent in the film. Was he the first choice for the role?

SH: I think he really was. I think back to Jim Nicholson and the discussions we had in London.

SS: Miss Remberg, we wonder if you have any memories of making *CIRCUS OF HORRORS*.

Erika Remberg: Well, I had to learn this act on the rope. I practiced three or four weeks, so they could do the close shots and the half close shots. And then I had this scene with the python that I dreaded very much. I ended up becoming very great friends with the python; I almost wanted to buy it! Except my husband said, "If you bring that python home, we divorce!"

SS: We were amazed to see that the python was actually around your legs.

ER: Yeah. I used to carry it around my body. It would snuggle around my body and stay there. I would go for a nap after lunch, if I had the time, with the python around my belly, and when I woke the python was curled up next to me on a pillow. It would sleep in the bathroom next to my dressing room, curled around the toilet. (Laughs) A real character, that python.

SS: An affectionate co-star. How high up were you when you did the rope trick?

ER: About 25 to 30 feet.

SS: That high? That's incredible.

ER: No. No difference. The height makes no difference.

SS: There's a close-up in the film, when the rope breaks and you fall. When you hit the ground, it really looks like you hit it hard. Obviously you didn't fall from that great a height...

ER: No, no.

SS: But it certainly looks painful.

ER: It looks like that? Then it was done right!



Anton Diffring, with the artist Kenneth Griffith and Jane Hylton, indulges in a little-known fad of the 60s: tabletop plastic surgery. His patient is Carla Challoner.

the NEWS HOUND



In keeping with the carnival atmosphere of this particular issue of *Scarlet Street*, the Hound would first like to mention that his long-awaited starring role in the motion picture *CARNIVORE OF SOULS* has been canceled due to creative differences. [They didn't want him.—Ed.] Despite this unfortunate turn of events, your canine correspondent returns with news hot off the entertainment wire.....

Murder, mystery, and mayhem is headed for your local movie house: Director Brian DePalma returns to his thriller roots with *RAISING CAIN*. John Lithgow stars as a child psychologist who, when wife Lolita Davidovich gives birth, becomes the Obsessive Father from Hell. DePalma loves using the mild-mannered Lithgow as a bad guy, having cast him previously in *OBSESSION* and *BLOW OUT*.... Sean Connery is tentatively set to star in director Philip Kaufman's *RISING SUN*, from Michael Crichton's controversial thriller about murder in the offices of a Japan-owned corporation.... Robert DeNiro and Jessica Lange follow *CAPE FEAR* with yet another film-noir remake *NIGHT AND THE CITY*, due this fall from Fox.... Richard Gere, seen recently as a psychiatrist in *FINAL ANALYSIS*, takes a terrible trip to the other side of the couch in *MR. JONES*. Gere gets thrown into the state mental hospital after being misdiagnosed as a schizophrenic (he's really just drugged to the gills). Sultry Lena Olin stars as his very personal therapist.... Annabella Sciorra (*JUNGLE FEVER*) is another shrink in trouble in *SESSIONS*, in which she becomes entwined in a series of wacky murders. Jill Clayburgh and Alan Alda also star.

In *UNLAWFUL ENTRY*, Kurt Russell and Madeleine Stowe call the cops after their home is burglarized. Bad move. On their doorstep appears awful Officer Ray Liotta, to make them wish the burglars were back.... Andy Garcia plays a man with a subtle character flaw—he murders his wives—in *JENNIFER EIGHT*. Lenny Van Dohlen, *TWIN PEAKS*' suicidal orchid-grower, is the hit man hired to cut down current spouse Uma Thurman.... Lots of things blow up in New Line's *LIVE WIRE*, starring Pierce Brosnan as a

bomb expert and *DARK SHADOWS*' Ben Cross as a terrorist with a devastating new secret explosive (hint: Pakistani food is involved).... French director Luc Besson's popular thriller *LA FEMME NIKITA*, about a young hood-turned-hitwoman, gets the American treatment in a version now in production, with Bridget Fonda in the lead. Besson was originally slated to direct the Yankee version as well, but was

Hauer as the Vampire King and Luke Perry of *BEVERLY HILLS 90210* as Buffy's boyfriend. Fran Rubel Kuzui (*TO-KYO POP*) directs.... Still more horrors include *BODY SNATCHERS*, a \$13 million follow-up, not to Don Siegel's '56 original, but to Philip Kaufman's '78 remake. Abel Ferrara directs and Meg Tilly stars.... "A strange and stylized ghost story" is how film composer Danny Elfman describes his premiere effort as writer/director. Tim Burton serves as executive producer of the as-yet-untitled work.... The long-awaited big-screen version of Andrew Lloyd Webber's *THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA* may soon go into production, with the busy Joel Schumacher returning to the project as director (Franco Zeffirelli had previously been announced as replacement). Production delays have prompted star Michael Crawford to wonder publicly if he'll be more suited to play the old opera manager than the Phantom.

At the top of the TV news is *THE YOUNG INDIANA JONES CHRONICLES*, George Lucas' unique and utterly painless weekly history lesson. The spectacular ABC series, which costs \$1.5 million per episode to produce, tells tales of the globe-trotting Indy, as a young boy (played by Corey Carrier) and a teenager (Sean Patrick Flanery), encountering a variety of historical figures in various parts of the world. Unusual in its "epic" look and its wide range of genres and story styles, the Lucas-film/Paramount series is continuing production in 11 different countries. ABC has committed to 15 hour-long episodes this season, each helmed by a different director, including veterans Nicholas Roeg, Terry Jones, and Bille August. Steven Spielberg and Harrison Ford might join the show somewhere down the road, too.

In other television news, Danny Bilson and Paul De Meo, producers of the late, great *FLASH* series and Disney's *ROCKETEER*, bring another comic-book hero to the small screen with their new ABC adventure series, *HUMAN TARGET*. Based on the DC Comics character, the show stars Rick Springfield as master of technology and disguise Christopher Chance.... *TOPPER*, the befuddled host to



22-year-old Sean Patrick Flanery plays 16-year-old Indy in *THE YOUNG INDIANA JONES CHRONICLES*.

Photo: Brent Petersen/ABC

replaced by John Badham. The original *femme Nikita*, French actress Anne Parillaud, stars in John Landis' horror/comedy *INNOCENT BLOOD*, playing a lady vampire who puts the bite on bad guys. Anthony La Paglia and Dennis Hopper co-star.

Other vampires returning in the sinister shape of sequels include *THE LOST BOYS II* from the original team of Richard Donner and Joel Schumacher, and *LOVE AT SECOND BITE*, again starring George Hamilton and Susan Saint James, under Stan Dragoti's direction. Striking terror in their hearts will be *BUFFY, THE VAMPIRE SLAYER*: cheerleader by day, nemesis of the undead by night. Kristy Swanson stars as Buffy, along with Rutger



Rick Springfield plays THE HUMAN TARGET in a new series based on the DC Comics character.

friendly ghosts, will return to TV in a CBS telefilm directed by John Landis.... Tom Hanks will direct and star in a June episode of HBO's *TALES FROM THE CRYPT*, about a Bluebeard who marries and murders rich old ladies. Treat Williams co-stars.... Screenwriters David Mickey Evans and Robert Gunter (*RADIO FLYER*) are working on the pilot for a new NBC/Columbia Pictures TV series based on Jules Verne's *Journey to the Center of the Earth*.

Some intriguing projects are due this fall for the legit stage: A new musical ver-

sion of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* is due to hit the Broadway boards, based on a concept album featuring performers Colm Wilkinson and Linda Eder. Producers are negotiating to get both to repeat their roles. Wilkinson has recently been touring as *THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA*.... An unlikely cast depicts an imaginary battle of wits between magician-debunker Harry Houdini and spiritualism devotee Arthur Conan Doyle in a new play entitled *HARRY AND ARTHUR*. If financing is completed, it will head for Broadway this fall, starring Leonard Nimoy as Conan Doyle and the play's co-author, William Shatner, as Houdini.

Lying in wait at your local video emporium this season will be a bushel of interesting titles.... Laser videodisc collectors get a treat from MGM-UA this April when Billy Wilder's 1957 *WITNESS FOR THE PROSECUTION* is released, along with George Pal's 1960 *THE TIME MACHINE*, in deluxe letterbox editions. Also available is the great Bogart/Raft classic *THEY DRIVE BY NIGHT*. April brings crime thrillers *HOMICIDE*, *RICHOCET*, and *BLOOD AND CONCRETE* and the Dustin Hoffman starrer *BILLY BATHGATE* to the rental racks, as well as reduced prices to Warner titles *LETHAL WEAPON 2*, *BLUE VELVET*, and *BATMAN*.... *SHERLOCK HOLMES AND THE LEADING LADY*, the second release in Harmony Gold's *THE GOLDEN YEARS OF SHERLOCK HOLMES* series, finally arrives in a 122-minute home-

video version from Vestron/Live on May 13th. Holmes and Watson are portrayed by Christopher Lee and Patrick Macnee, with Morgan Fairchild on hand as Irene Adler. Also new to video in May are *FEAR*, an excellent made-for-cable psychic thriller starring Ally Sheedy; Bette Davis as identical twins in the outrageous 1964 thriller *DEAD RINGER*; and a four-hour release of Stephen King's short-lived ABC-TV series *GOLDEN YEARS*, featuring the conclusion never shown on television due to its premature cancellation.... More laserdisc collectibles arrive in June, when gangster classics *PUBLIC ENEMY* and *LITTLE CAESAR* are released in a two-disc package from MGM-UA, and the first three James Bond features (*DR. NO*, *FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE*, and *GOLD-FINGER*) hit the stores in a special widescreen boxed set.

A fond and furry farewell until next time from....

The News Hound

P.S. The Hound would like to report on events occurring in your area that would be of interest to our readers. Listings of repertory cinemas, special screenings and seminars, live theatre, and fan gatherings are especially welcome. Send press releases (several months in advance) to The News Hound, c/o *Scarlet Street*, P.O. Box 604, Glen Rock, NJ 07452.

Research assistance provided by Kevin G. Shinnick and Elinor Bernstein.



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BITE

Wes Craven (*A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET*) is the executive producer of *NIGHTMARE CAFE*, a one-hour series set in a friendly but strange cafe where unsuspecting patrons encounter turning points in their lives. The cafe serves up an extraordinary second chance to change one's past or perhaps guarantee one's future.

Robert Englund portrays Blackie, the mischievous cafe owner and supernatural interlocutor. Englund is best known to suspense-thriller moviegoers as the scar-faced, claw-handed, fedora-sporting character Freddy Krueger in *A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET* which broke box-office records worldwide and led to five more successful feature films and a television series.

He made his motion-picture debut in *BUSTER AND BILLE*, in which he played a sidekick to Jan-Michael Vincent and Pamela Sue Martin. His other film credits include *STAY HUNGRY*, with Arnold Schwarzenegger, and *PHANTOM OF THE OPERA*.

Jack Coleman (*DYNASTY*) stars as Frank, the affable short-order cook, and Lindsay Frost (*MANCUSO*, *FBI*) plays Fay, the cynical but sensitive waitress. Both of them were drawn to the cafe on the night of their own deaths and were brought together by the ageless Blackie.

BITE



THE RETURN OF JIMMY OLSEN AND LOIS LANE

by Richard Valley and Jessie Lilley

Flash! Those of you lucky enough to tune in *THE ADVENTURES OF SUPERBOY* last November were doubtless pleased to see two new employees working with Clark Kent and Lana Lang at the Bureau for Extranormal Matters. Yes, it was Jimmy Olsen and Lois Lane! Well, not really—it was Jack Larson and Noel Neill, both of whom, we hardly need add, starred in *THE ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN* from 1953 to 1957. Jack and Noel were asked by *SUPERBOY*'s producers, DC Comics, and by Gerard "Superboy" Christopher himself to make special guest-star appearances on what will unfortunately be the Boy of Steel's final season. *Scarlet Street* journeyed to Capital City (which is, in Superman country, midway between Smallville and Metropolis) and spoke with both Super-veterans about their life-long involvement with Krypton's last citizen. Last issue, Jack Larson held center stage. This time, the spotlight is on Superman's girlfriend, Noel Neill...



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The actors who will forever be identified as Jimmy Olsen and Lois Lane: Jack Larson and Noel Neill. The former *Daily Planet* reporters were reunited 34 years after completion of the final *SUPERMAN* episode for *THE ADVENTURES OF SUPERBOY*.



Lois Lane on the job for the Daily Planet. Noel Neill first played the intrepid girl reporter in the 1948 Columbia serial SUPERMAN.

NOEL NEILL

interviewed by
Jessie Lilley

Scarlet Street: We'd like to start with the basics. Where were you born and raised?

Noel Neill: Born Minneapolis, Minnesota; raised there.

SS: How'd you get interested in acting?

NN: Oh, through friends out here in Los Angeles. Mother and I were visiting in Denver and various cities, you know, seeing friends and relatives. An acquaintance out here suggested I go on an interview and shortly thereafter I was under contract to Paramount.

SS: What was it like working at Paramount in the 40s?

NN: Oh, it was wonderful! In those days, of course, the lots were like family. Jack Larson was at Warner Brothers, I was at Paramount, and every studio had a contract list. You were under salary and you'd take singing lessons, acting lessons, and they'd place you in different movies or loan you out to different studios.

SS: They placed you in the Henry Aldrich series, which was Paramount's version of *Andy Hardy*.

NN: That's right; I worked in three of them. Jimmy Lydon was Henry Aldrich and Charlie Smith played Dizzy, who was my boyfriend, theoretically. That was pretty much it; the other supports were the mother and father.

SS: What was your character's name?

NN: I don't think I even had a name.

SS: You were "Dizzy's girl"?

NN: Yes, and we just walked around the park. They were a very nice group. Let's

see, Frank Coughlin, Jr. was in them; he's bringing out a book soon. It's so long ago and almost everybody is out of the business, now, or deceased.

SS: You were also in the *Teen Agers* series at Monogram.

NN: Yes! I was on loan-out from Paramount when I did those. We were supposed to do seven of them and we did maybe four or five. As a matter of fact, I still get theatre posters; one gentleman back East is in that business and sends them and I go, "Oh! My heavens!" (Laughs) They were fun. Then the series ended, but it didn't matter; I was still under contract to Paramount.

SS: Monogram was one of the so-called Poverty Row studios. Did you appear in any of their mystery or horror films?

NN: I think I did a Charlie Chan. They did quite a few at Monogram; in fact, I talked to Frank Coughlin the other day and he mentioned the Chans. I said, "Oh, my God!" I couldn't even remember the name of it. You know, we did so many movies, in and out in a couple of days and, "Thank you." As long as the checks didn't bounce! (Laughs) Oh, dear. Charlie Chan. Lord knows what it was.

SS: What about the bigger-budgeted films at Paramount?

NN: I worked in *SUBMARINE COMMAND* with Bill Holden, Nancy Olson; it had quite a cast. I did *HERE COME THE WAVES* with Betty Hutton, Bing Crosby, and Sonny Tufts; I was Sonny Tufts' girlfriend in that. We did dancing and singing and it was fun.

SS: What was Bing Crosby like?

NN: Oh, he was so nice. Just a wonderful person. I actually met him when I got a job

singing at Del Mar, the race track, in the turf club. That's where everybody in those days had horses; it was a very social event to go to Del Mar for the season and stay down there. They had an orchestra every Friday and Saturday night, so I kind of started there and an agent found me.

SS: So you were singing before you went into acting?

NN: Well, just a little bit; not really much. Some friends at NBC had said there was an audition for a singer, and I said, "Oh, pooh. Oh, what the heck?" But I never pursued it, 'cause I wasn't very good.

SS: How did you get cast in the *Superman* serials?

NN: Well, actually, I had worked for Sam Katzman on another serial. I did a Brick Bradford serial, of all things, and I played a native girl. And just about that time they were casting the *Superman* serial, and I looked like the DC Comics version, you know, with the long hair, and so I went over. Of course, I'd worked for Sam before, and he said, "Well, fine. You look the part, and we know you can act." So there we were. Kirk and I did 15 episodes first. And then they sold well in the theatres, so we did another 15 after that.

SS: What was it like to work with Kirk Alyn? Did he enjoy his part as *Superman*?

NN: Oh, yes. Yes, yes, yes. (Laughs) He—well—he was rather a difficult person. Well, he knows it, 'cause I tell him about it whenever I see him. (Laughs) No love lost, although we've kind of come to a quasi-understanding. He's just one of those people who wasn't too pleasant. In fact, Jack Larson would never go on any talk shows with him—which is understandable



Safe at last. Superman (Kirk Alyn) gives Lois (Noel Neill) the air in 1948's SUPERMAN.

because he didn't work with Kirk, so why should he be with him? We were all so fond of George Reeves; our minds were a little slanted towards George, of course.

SS: *George Reeves' death, apparently by suicide, still comes up in the press. Do you have your own opinion on that?*

NN: I think both Jack and I stay with the suicide theory. They've never proved anything else. They've tried. And every year you can always expect a book to come out, or an article, or something on television, because people want to read it. Jack rarely does interviews about it because he and George were quite close.

SS: *You mentioned how much you looked like Lois Lane in the comic books. Were you familiar with the books and cartoons before you were cast?*

NN: No, I wasn't. In those days, boys would be more interested in the comic books. Even now, it seems that those who write and send a comic book and want me to sign it are pretty much boys. But, no, I never did read them. Dad was in the newspaper business, so he probably figured that anything like comic books were trash. One must "rise above!" (Laughs)

SS: *You played Lois Lane differently in the serial than in the television show. You're much softer in the TV version. Was that what you wanted, or were you directed to play it that way?*

NN: Well, when we did the serials we worked faster. In the TV show you had a little more time, and could play it more like a normal person, so to speak, rather than just go go go and be saved by Superman and fight the heavies.

SS: *You did two serials: SUPERMAN and ATOM MAN VS SUPERMAN. Did you like one better than the other or were they basically the same?*

NN: Well, I finally saw them about a year ago when DC Comics came out with the cassette, and they sent me the 30 chapters of the serials. It was the first time I had seen them, and I thought they weren't too bad, actually.

SS: *How were you cast in the TV show?*

NN: You mean why did I replace...?

SS: *Well, we were wondering why Phyllis Coates left the show, and why she's been telling interviewers that, the one and only time she met you, you slammed the door in her face?*

NN: I've never met Phyllis Coates. She had a rather scathing interview in one of those little publications, and I was just... so...furious. The gentleman who wrote it was nice enough to send me a copy, and I said, "I can't believe it!" She was just flat-out lying like Kirk Alyn does. He, of course, has a reason. He does conventions; that's the way he makes his money, and he has to embellish on things when he makes his little speeches. Perfectly understandable. But one time I was at one of the conventions and I couldn't believe what I was hearing. (Laughs)



Noel appeared in the Henry Aldrich series for Paramount and The Teen Agers series (pictured here) for Monogram. This one is **CAMPUS SLEUTH**.

SS: *Phyllis Coates said George Reeves took her to your dressing room to meet you, that you told her you hated her, and that you slammed the door shut. We assume you were a little upset when you heard that?*

NN: I was just furious. I called Jack immediately and he said, "Well, don't fret." And I said, "Jack, I never met her and I would never have slammed the door or done something dumb like that!" It's probably a very good thing she was up in northern California at that point. (Laughs) Oh, I'd have made a little call.

SS: *Why did Phyllis Coates leave THE ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN?*

NN: According to Jack, she did a pilot with Jack Carson, who was a big comedian at that time. She just figured it would be better for her career to be the feminine lead in a show with Carson, and she had a deadline to let the SUPERMAN group know back East, 'cause they were going to start filming again. Well, Whitney Ellsworth, who became our producer after the first 26 episodes—they got rid of Bob Maxwell, who had done the first 26 and also some, ahem, naughties—anyway, Mr. Ellsworth called my agent and said, "We know that Noel did the serials and we've got until Friday to hear whether Phyllis Coates is coming back or not. If not, would Noel like to carry on?" So it was really that simple. The other series didn't pan out for her, but it was her choice; she gambled and lost.

SS: *Had you ever appeared in any movies with your co-stars from the TV show? Did you know any of them before you did the show?*

NN: No. Actually, George Reeves was at Paramount about the time I was, but we had never worked together.

SS: *Robert Shayne was Inspector Henderson, and John Hamilton, of course, was Perry White.*

NN: John; dear John. Yes, he died in the 50s. I loved him. He was so funny.



SS: *How were they to work with?*

NN: Fortunately, we all got along fine. We worked such long hours and so fast that we didn't have time to socialize; the minute we finished the 26 shows, everybody just split and went their own way. George had a lady friend and I was married and Jack was into his writing. As I was telling Jack the other day; I said, "Gosh, we've seen each other and talked to each other more lately than in all the years we worked together!" (Laughs)

SS: *You had pretty short shooting schedules.*

NN: Well, we did two a week. We had 13 weeks and we did 26. And we just worked late 'til we finished.



SS: Do you have a favorite episode from the show?

NN: Oh, I kind of like the one where I dreamt I was going to marry Superman. I've often said it was the ham in me, because I had more to do in that one than any of the others. (Laughs)

SS: Lois did have a little less to do in some of the later episodes, didn't she? Still, she was very popular...

NN: I'll never forget one convention; this kid came up to me, a little stoned, I'm afraid, and he said, "Oh, when I was young, I used to run home from school and I'd turn on the television set and I'd crawl under the set and try to look up Lois Lane's dress." (Laughs) It was such a visual picture, I thought I'd die laughing. I



could just see—in the old days the set would stand on a little table—I could just see this rotten kid! Crawling under the set to look up Lois Lane's dress! Well, I never! (Laughs)

SS: In one of the final SUPERMAN episodes both Lois and Jimmy got to fly.

NN: That was the last show we filmed. It was called ALL THAT GLITTERS.

SS: Did you enjoy it?

NN: It was fun! One day the prop man came in and said, "Okay, kids, everybody bring in an old bathing suit tomorrow!" And I thought, "What in the world is going on?" (Laughs) They had to make a mold for our bodies, like George used, and then they put you on this mold, which was sort of like a frying pan with a long handle, and then the wardrobe would go on. They



would sew the costumes up on the side, off camera, and they'd fly you. They'd move you so you were banking up and down with the wind and smoke blowing through. It was interesting, but we thought afterwards how tiresome it must have been for George, lying between takes on this metal contraption. They'd say, "Okay, you can relax", and you'd just hang there with arms and legs dangling. (Laughs) Then you'd have to straighten up again, arch your back and hold the arms out, head up, and it was really a chore.

SS: So that was the last episode. After SUPERMAN went off the air, what did you do?

NN: I didn't do a thing. I was married and we both liked the beach and we played a lot of volleyball and pooped around.



Jimmy Olsen and Lois Lane meet Clark Kent and Lana Lang. Actually, guest stars Jack Larson and Noel Neill (LEFT) did not play Jimmy and Lois, but Gerard Christopher and Stacy Haiduk (RIGHT) were Clark and Lana in THE ADVENTURES OF SUPERBOY episode PARANOIA.

"This kid came up to me and said, 'Oh, when I was young, I used to run home from school and I'd turn on the television set and I'd crawl under the set and try to look up Lois Lane's dress.'"

SS: You made a cameo appearance in *SUPERMAN: THE MOVIE* as Lois Lane's mother.

NN: That was fun, but I hadn't worked for so long that I felt rather strange. Every time we had to do another take, even though it was not my fault, I felt that it was. We went up to Canada to do that and they had a lot of weather problems. I didn't meet Christopher or Margot until maybe a month or two later. Happened I had planned a trip to Egypt and stopped off in London for a couple of days, and the publicity group arranged for me to come out to the set and meet everybody. They were filming a sequence where he flew with her off her balcony in her negligee. And I thought, "Oh, my gosh!" I couldn't believe it; they were still using wires! I mean, we didn't even use those in the old series!

SS: What did you think of Margot Kidder's Lois Lane? Did you like her performance?

NN: Not really. I was still doing college shows at that time, and most of the kids agreed. They were probably being nice to me, but they seemed to feel that she played it too hard and too slick. Of course, I think the movie makers put themselves into a corner when they had her find out who Superman really was. There wasn't much you could do with the story after that, and she didn't appear much in the subsequent movies.

SS: Tell us about appearing on *THE ADVENTURES OF SUPERBOY*.

NN: Oh, it was interesting working on the show in Florida! Gerard Christopher is so good looking and so nice to work with and just a wonderful person. He makes a great-looking Clark Kent and a great-looking Superman! It's kind of a shame they have to, legally, call the show *SUPERBOY*, because people say, "Oh, Superboy, just a little rotten kid running around in a Superman suit." But, you know, it's an adult show! Years ago, right after George died, they made one pilot of a *SUPERBOY* with a young boy, and they made one pilot of *SUPERPUP*. (Laughs) Which didn't go very far! So I guess I had that in mind and didn't watch it. But it's an excellent show!

SS: Whom do you play?

NN: Well! Jack and I were rather surprised when we received our scripts. He said, "Have you read it?" and I said, "Yes." He said, "Have you figured out what we're doing?" and I said, "Well, no. We're sort of playing agents." We thought we would come back as old Lois Lane and old Jimmy Olsen, which would be understandable. There were Superboys at three ages in a couple of the *SUPERBOY* shows. Ron

Ely played an older one, looking great, and then Gerry, of course, and then the little boy. And I thought, "Hey! Maybe they're going to do something like that!" We read the scripts and I was playing Alexis and he was playing Jake Lamont, and I said, "Funny, you don't look Italian." (Laughs)

SS: What did you wear?

NN: A suit. What else? And Jack wore his bow tie.

SS: Excellent. Did you wear the famous Lois Lane hat?

NN: No. I don't know why. I actually brought a couple of little pillboxes that I used for the college shows. I thought, "Well, maybe we can work this out somehow." But the show was all inside the office, although I could have walked in with it and taken it off. Jack said, "I don't even know why I'm wearing this silly bow tie."

SS: Because!

NN: Because! That's right! Well, as Gerry said, it was kind of a publicity thing and, naturally, Jack and I said that we'd be happy to do anything to help. Jack said, "We must carry the flag." (Laughs)

SS: What's next for Noel Neill? Would you like to get back into the business?

NN: Oh, I don't think so. I really don't. Things have changed so in the business.

Shortly after we started in television, many of the big studios, one by one, closed. Jack and I—and even Phyllis in those days—we knew, through our agents, each casting director in each studio. And they knew you, and it was simple to get a job. If you had a few days, you could always do a Western! You could always find work. But now, it's so different; there are no real studios, just production companies that rent space, make a movie, and fold. It's so transient.

SS: Well, we're certainly glad you did *SUPERBOY*.

NN: That was fun. What's your phone number in case I stumble across that Charlie Chan movie? Was it *SEA DRAGON*? I don't know, but it was at Monogram.



Dream lovers.

VAMPIRE CIRCUS

The Greatest Blood Show on Earth

by
**Bruce G.
Hallenbeck**

The vampire as child molester. If that sounds like an unusual (not to mention distasteful) theme for a horror film, it's only one of many unusual ideas tastefully presented in one of Hammer's greatest films, *VAMPIRE CIRCUS* (1971). Although the film's running time is listed officially in the Hammer book *The House of Horror* (Lorrimer Publishing, London) as 87 minutes, that isn't the version released in the U.S. by 20th Century Fox.

The Fox version was rated PG when released in 1972 on a double bill with *COUNTESS DRACULA*. Both films were drastically cut. However, the original British version is available on tape in England, and those of us Yanks who are fortunate enough to have seen it feel that it's brilliant enough to be included among the first rank of Hammer Films.

VAMPIRE CIRCUS, like all films, began with a "concept". The story was concocted by producer Wilbur Stark and writer George Baxt. Baxt apparently had a thing for circuses—he also wrote the famous Anglo-Amalgamated picture *CIRCUS OF HORRORS* (1960), which starred Anton Diffring in one of his best roles.

Judson Kinberg, an American screenwriter of considerable merit, was hired by Stark and Michael Carreras to write the script. Kinberg had written such fine films as *REACH FOR GLORY* (1963) and *THE COLLECTOR* (1965), and he turned in one of the best scripts ever written for a Hammer Film. It's one of the few that can be taken on several different levels.

There is the typical Hammer theme of a curse, in this case placed on Schtettel, a Serbian village in the early 19th century. With the curse comes a plague (equated with vampirism) and with the plague comes the circus—the Circus of Nights, rather like Ray Bradbury's *Dark Carnival* in his 1961 novel *Something Wicked This Way Comes*. In fact, there are many resemblances between the two stories: like Bradbury's *Autumn People*, the vampires entice the residents of the village with various forms of seduction before they suck them dry—and, as in Bradbury's book and the subsequent 1983 film version, children are used as implements of revenge. The *Mirror of Life* sequences in the two stories are also very similar.

This is not to say that Kinberg ripped off Bradbury. It just indicates that the circus background has always lent itself to horror, from the time of Tod Browning's *FREAKS* (1932) to that of Bradbury's film. But *VAMPIRE CIRCUS*, with its clever intermingling of perverse themes, is perhaps the most successful attempt ever made at turning the magic of a circus into a very *Dark Carnival* indeed.

Bruce G. Hallenbeck has contributed articles to Cinefantastique, Little Shoppe of Horrors, and Fangoria. He has also written, directed, and co-produced VAMPYRE, now available on video. This article originally appeared in Little Shoppe of Horrors No. 9.



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VAMPIRE CIRCUS

Synopsis

(Adapted from the 20th Century Fox pressbook)

The scene is the Serbian village of Schtettel. The time is 1810. Anna Mueller disappears from home. She is discovered by her distraught husband, Professor Mueller, entering Count Mitterhouse's castle with one of the village children, Jenny Schilts.

Within the castle Jenny is attacked by its supernatural tenant, Count Mitterhouse, who sinks his fangs into her throat.

A party of villagers, led by Mueller, the Burgermeister, and Hauser, break in. There is a struggle in which Mueller plunges a stake into the Count's heart. In his death throes, the Count curses the children of the village.

The dead child's father is prevented from stabbing Anna by Hauser, who insists that they must strip and scourge her. When her husband engineers her escape, Anna flees to the castle, where blood from her wounds revives her vampire lover long enough for him to mutter "my cousin Emil" before the angry villagers set fire to his home.

Fifteen years later there is a plague in Schtettel. Villagers blame the vampire's curse, but Dr. Kersh believes that, if he could circumvent the road blocks isolating the stricken village, he could return with sufficient medicines to effect a cure.

His determination is strengthened when he finds that a circus has arrived in the village; with the aid of his son, Anton, he manages to get through the road blocks.

Leader of the mysterious troupe is the Count's cousin Emil. Unsuspecting, the villagers bring their children to see the show, in which the aerialist twins Heinrich and Helga simulate bats, and, when the Gypsy Woman releases a caged panther, apparently to savage the Burgermeister's family, it miraculously becomes Emil.

Visiting the Mirror of Life, the Burgermeister views his own death at the fangs of Count Mitterhouse, and collapses, never to recover. Later, Hauser's young sons are led into the mirror maze by Heinrich and Helga; the boys' bodies are discovered soon after.

The Burgermeister's daughter Rosa is bitten by Emil, but the twins meet their own death when they try to kill Mueller's daughter Dora.

At this point, Dr. Kersh returns. He knows who Emil is, and tells the village council. In the bloodbath that follows, Emil, the Gypsy Woman, and the entire Circus of Nights perishes, as does Count Mitterhouse for the second and last time. Anton and Dora are left to face the dawn.

Michael Carreras, then head of Hammer, hand-picked director Robert Young (no, not Robert Young of FATHER KNOWS BEST and MARCUS WELBY fame, but a vastly talented filmmaker who up to that point had only made documentaries and commercials). Carreras had seen Young's work and was so impressed that he gave the fledgling director the task of helming VAMPIRE CIRCUS.

Under Young's guidance, VAMPIRE CIRCUS combines many of Hammer's traditional themes with more disturbing ones. Many films of the period, particularly British horrors, were heavily influenced by the worldwide success of WITCHFINDER GENERAL, which was released by AIP in 1968 as THE CONQUEROR WORM. One of the intriguing ideas set forth in that watershed film was the moral ambiguity of the characters: some of the heroes were as sadistic as the villains.

The pre-credit sequence of VAMPIRE CIRCUS is like a film in itself, in that it explores every theme that is to follow. The vampires seem to get their sexual jollies by biting small children; certainly Anna Mueller (Domini Blythe) appears to be in ecstasy as she voyeuristically views Count Mitterhouse (Robert Tayman) savagely fang a little blonde girl (Jane Derby) to death. ("One lust feeds the other," Mitterhouse coos to Anna after savaging the child's throat.) Moments later, they make love.



Mueller (Laurence Payne) drives a stake through the heart of Count Mitterhouse (Robert Tayman).

When the villagers attack, they're not the stereotypical torch-wielding Universal vigilantes. They line up to whip Anna for her sins, taking obvious pleasure in punishing her. For one tense moment, it looks as though she's even going to be gang-raped by "the good guys". Fortunately, that doesn't happen—perhaps only because she escapes in time.

From the moment Christopher Lee caressed Melissa Stribling's neck in HORROR OF DRACULA (1958), Hammer had equated vampirism with sex. This equation becomes far more disturbing in VAMPIRE CIRCUS because most of the victims are children or teenagers. The Mirror of Life sequence, in which the Hauser boys (Roderick and Barnaby Shaw) become the victims of the twin vampires, Heinrich and Helga (Robin Sachs and Lalla Ward), is like something out of Cocteau. It's a splendidly eerie, atmospheric, and surrealistic scene—and in some sort of perverse, poetic way, it's erotic as well. (Perhaps it's partly because Ward looks so fetching in fangs.)

The idea of vampirism and plague intermingling goes back at least to F.W. Murnau's NOSFERATU (1922), in which Count Orlock/Dracula is constantly followed by a coterie of rats, and people die of the plague wherever he goes. It might be said that Young even improved on Murnau by not making the symbolism so obvious.

Few horror films have been so full of wonderful

characters, and even fewer have had those characters so well portrayed as those in *VAMPIRE CIRCUS*. In fact, Kinberg admits that he may have included a few too many characters for the film's all-too-brief running time. For example, one would have liked to have seen more of Tayman's Count Mitterhouse. Nonetheless, everyone does a fine job in the time allotted them.

Most memorable is Adrienne Corri as the Gypsy Woman, announcing that the circus is in town to "steal the money from dead men's eyes". It's significant that the remark is addressed to Thorley Walters as the Burgermeister, for later in the film we see him lying in his coffin with coins placed over his eyes.

Laurence Payne is a stand-out as Mueller, one of the few rational characters in a village gone mad. His quiet authority and gentle manner are well conveyed by Payne, who also appeared with Corri in *THE TELL-TALE HEART* (1960). The fact that he, too, bites the dust at film's end is perhaps a mistake; it happens so fast that we don't even have time to mourn this decent human being.

John Moulder-Brown as Anton Kersh and Lynne Frederick as Dora Mueller are among the better of Hammer's requisite young couples. They are both appealing and genuine, and Frederick's scene in the forest, where she encounters the bodies of villagers who have been slaughtered by a panther, is one of genuine terror. There's a terrific moment when we think the beast is about to attack her: we see what seem to be eyes shining in the darkness, but then, Val Lewton style, the eyes move forward and we see that they're merely shiny buckles on the boots of a villager.

Anthony Corlan (now Higgins), the hero of *TASTE THE BLOOD OF DRACULA* (1970), is the creepy Emil, who does a pretty good magic act: he transforms into the aforementioned panther. Corlan, along with Sachs and Ward (the latter of *DR. WHO* fame) as the twins, are the vampires that get the most screen time, and Corlan's death scene—in which a stake is "borrowed" from the dead Count Mitterhouse to kill Emil—is spectacular, if a bit unlikely.



Emil (Anthony Corlan) makes love to the Burgermeister's daughter Rosa (Christina Paul) in the panther's cage: one of several nude scenes excised from the American cut of VAMPIRE CIRCUS.

(Mitterhouse naturally springs back to life, only to be decapitated by a crossbow string.)

David Prowse, in his second film for Hammer (the first was 1970's *HORROR OF FRANKENSTEIN* and the third 1974's



Human
fangs
ripping
throats—
no sawdust
can soak up
the torrent
of blood!

VAMPIRE CIRCUS

20th Century Fox Presents A HAMMER PRODUCTION

VAMPIRE CIRCUS ADRIENNE CORRI · LAURENCE PAYNE
THORLEY WALTERS · JOHN MOULDER-BROWN
and ANTHONY CORLAN also starring LYNNE FREDERICK Produced by WILBUR STARK
Directed by ROBERT YOUNG Screenplay by JUDSON KINBERG Color by DeLuxe®

FRANKENSTEIN AND THE MONSTER FROM HELL), adds a lot to the color of the film, and is particularly powerful in the scene in which he breaks into Dora's house and crushes a crucifix in his fingers. However, the stand-out of the circus performers is Skip Martin as Michael the dwarf, a Fellini-esque character whose hideous laugh and sadistic manner are unforgettable. There's one remarkable shot in which he peels off his clown face to reveal a sadder, more evil clown face beneath—pure Hammer surrealism.

There's a lot of nudity in *VAMPIRE CIRCUS*, most of it in the pre-credit sequence involving the appealing Blythe (whatever happened to this actress?), but the infamous Tiger Woman (billed only as Serena) has the most stylish nude scene in the film, kicking up her paws at a circus performance.

Moray Grant's atmospheric photography is superb, and David Whittaker's score is one of the finest in the Hammer canon. The music for the entire pre-credit sequence is available on the British *MUSIC FROM THE HAMMER FILMS*, released last year by Silva Screen Records.

VAMPIRE CIRCUS is one of Hammer's best, a gripping, all-stops-out horror show that is close to perfection (the only real fault with the film may be that it's a shade too fast, and we don't really have enough time to get to know all of its marvelous characters). Young later directed *CHARLEY BOY*, an episode of *HAMMER'S HOUSE OF HORRORS*, their 1980 TV series, but aside from that, we've seen no more genre films from him. If he can make a film like *VAMPIRE CIRCUS* for his first feature, then what may his encore be?



VAMPIRE CIRCUS

Credits

Producer: Wilbur Stark. Director: Robert Young. Screenplay: Judson Kinberg. Production Supervisor: Roy Skeggs. Production Manager: Tom Sachs. First Assistant Director: Derek Whitehurst. Lighting Cameraman: Moray Grant. Director of Photography: Walter Byatt. Art Director: Scott MacGregor. Editor: Peter Musgrave. Special Effects: Les Bowie. Music: David Whittaker. Continuity: June Randall. Casting Director: James Liggat. A Hammer Production. Released by American International Pictures. Running Time: 87 minutes.

Cast

Adrienne Corri (Gypsy Woman), Laurence Payne (Mueller), Richard Owens (Dr. Kersh), Thorley Walters (Burgermeister), John Moulder-Brown (Anton), Anthony Corlan (Emil), Lynne Frederick (Dora Mueller), Elizabeth Seal (Gerta Hauser), Robin Hunter (Hauser), Robin Sachs (Heinrich), Lalla Ward (Helga), Robert Tayman (Count Mitterhouse), Skip Martin (Michael), Dave Prowse (Strongman), Milovan and Serena (The Webbers), Roderick Shaw (Jon Hauser), Barnaby Shaw (Gustav Hauser), Jane Derby (Jenny).



NEWS

BITE

Filming began in March on *THE CASE OF THE LIBELED LADIES*, the 22nd Perry Mason mystery since Perry and Della Street returned in 1985's (aptly named) *PERRY MASON RETURNS*. This time out the murder victim, who rarely makes it past the first commercial break, is talk-show host Geraldo Rivera (as talk-show host Ted Mayne).

Mayne is the preening host of a popular TV show dealing in subjects of a sleazy nature. Hying his kiss-and-tell autobiography, Mayne sets in motion a series of tragic events. The women Mayne claims to have had torrid affairs with—Roxanne Shields, a famous TV star; Nora Turner, the widow of a celebrated congressman; Mary Singer, a high-fashion photographer; and Brenda Kingsley, a beautiful TV producer—are all implicated when Mayne meets his Un-Maker.

Roxanne is charged with Mayne's murder and, before you can hum one of television's best-loved themes, Perry, Della, and investigator Ken Malansky—Raymond Burr, Barbara Hale, and William R. Moses—are on the scene to defend her.

Co-starring in this latest two-hour whodunnit is Tracy Nelson as reporter Charley Adams. Christian T. Nyby directs from a script by Brian Clemens. *THE CASE OF THE LIBELED LADIES* (original title: *THE CASE OF THE RECKLESS ROMEO*) is scheduled for telecast on Tuesday, May 5th.

—Drew Sullivan

Milverton the Movie

*Charles Augustus Meets Jeremy Brett
in Granada TV's*

THE MASTER BLACKMAILER

by David Stuart Davies

Charles Augustus Milverton, "the king of all the blackmailers", is probably Conan Doyle's greatest villain. Unlike Professor Moriarty, he really does get the better of Sherlock Holmes, forcing him to abandon brainwork and deduction in order to assume the role of a common burglar. Although it is a delightful tale, one of the most popular in the Canon, "The Adventure of Charles Augustus Milverton" is not one of Sherlock Holmes' shining hours. Yet it was the one case, Jeremy Brett admitted to me while filming Granada's *THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES* (1988), that he really wanted to do. And now he's done it.

What is so amazing, however, is that this 12-page tale turns up as a two-hour television special! Screenwriter Jeremy Paul observed that, in essence, it is a three-scene story: the Milverton visit to Holmes, the burglary and murder, and the Baker Street dénouement. Looked at in these terms, it is not much on which to base over 100 minutes of screen time. It shows, I suppose, the amount of thought, ingenuity, and cunning required to turn it into an effective movie—a movie attempting to remain true to Conan Doyle's original. I believe Jeremy Paul has done this—and done it well. I know that there are others who would disagree.

Let me state my case. We are once again involved in the old argument concerning the role of the adapter/dramatizer. Does he simply transfer the written page directly into a form that can be acted? Not if he is worth his salt, he doesn't. We must be aware that the demands of drama are drastically different from those of a prose story. Equally, if one requires unwavering fidelity to the text, why not just read the story? The adapter has to interpret the story in dramatic terms for a visual audience, the greater part of which will not know Charles Augustus Milverton from Mr. Spock. With this premise in mind, it is remarkable that so many episodes of the Granada series have reflected the rhythm and structure of the original stories: much of this is due to the genius of Conan Doyle's writing.

"Milverton", in many ways, is an exception. As previously mentioned, it is short and disappointing in terms of Holmes' detective work, but there are in the story tantalizing hints of the untold tragedies and scenarios surrounding this "master blackmailer". It

David Stuart Davies is the author of Holmes of the Movies, Sherlock Holmes and the Hentzau Affair, Fixed Point: The Life and Death of Sherlock Holmes, and Sherlock Holmes through the Magnifying Glass. He is Co-President of The Northern Musgraves of Sherlock Holmes Society.



Jeremy Brett and Edward Hardwicke as Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson in THE MASTER BLACKMAILER.

is from these that Jeremy Paul has extracted various threads to weave a whole new tapestry around the original—a tapestry that presents graphically the full effect of this evil genius on the lives of his victims. Set into this tapestry is the story of the lady who finally "puts paid to" Milverton by firing five bullets into his "marble heart". We witness the commencement of her tragedy and see how her resentment and hatred ferment, finally bubbling over into fury and murderous intent. It is very satisfying to understand the reason for the tears and anger in her final confrontation with Milverton, so much so that we pull the trigger along with her.

This dramatization allows us an insight into the dark side of Victorian life. Colonel Dorking, for example, is betrayed by his homosexual lover on the eve of his marriage to Lady Charlotte Miles. Dorking refuses to pay Milverton for his indiscreet notes and, consequently, his secret love life is revealed, forcing him to take "the soldier's way out". All these scenes are new, yet they have germinated from within the text. As Jeremy Paul told me, "I have added nothing that isn't hinted at or suggested in the original story."

With these developments, Jeremy Paul was able to expand Holmes' involvement in the case, creating a mystery for him to solve. Therefore, as the program opens, the Great Detective is completely unaware of the identity of the vile creature who is blackmailing several noble families. This is the challenge for his racing engine of a brain.

Appropriately, the two outstanding scenes—Milverton's visit to Baker Street, where Holmes has to physically restrain Watson from attacking the blackguard, and the blackmailer's death at the hand of the veiled lady (five bullets pumped into his corpulent body)—are straight from Doyle and ripple with excitement.

In his research for the program, Jeremy Paul learned that at the same time the story was written, there was in London society an ambivalent character, friend of Ruskin, Whistler, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Burne-Jones, and other artists. His name was Charles Augustus Howell. There were many who believed him to be a blackmailer. It is probable that Arthur Conan Doyle would have known about him, and it is not pressing supposition too far to believe that he may have based his Charles Augustus on Howell. Jeremy Paul certainly followed this line of reasoning, which is why he presented Milverton as an art dealer—an ideal occupation, allowing him to move with ease in high society, gaining access to the secrets of the wealthy and vulnerable.

The script provides some very good roles for women, Lady Eva and Lady Swinstead in particular. These characters also were fleshed out from sketchy references in the story. They are played with style and gusto by Serena Gordon and Norma West.

Jeremy Brett and Edward Hardwicke are, as usual, excellent. There is less snarling and paper-tossing and more evidence of the cerebral man in Brett's portrayal than there has been of late; Hardwicke continues to present the ideal Watson, a portrayal a million miles away from that of Nigel Bruce. With the help of Jeremy Paul's dialogue, Hardwicke's Watson emerges as an intelligent, perceptive, and sophisticated companion. Particularly telling is his description of Milverton as "a boy brought up in lonely isolation, starved of parental affection. . . ." No wonder Holmes blanches at this, for it seems that Watson has unwittingly described Holmes' childhood.

Excellent performances, then, from our two main protagonists—and while not being complacent about this excellence, it is really Robert Hardy, as Milverton, who steals the show. He is portrayed exactly as Doyle has written him: ". . . a plump, hairless face, a perpetual frozen smile and two keen grey eyes which gleamed brightly from behind broad gold-rimmed glasses."

For the first part of the drama, he remains a vague figure, casting a dark shadow over the lives of his victims: we hear his voice, catch a back view of him, but it is only when Watson en-



Nickolas Grace, the Sheriff of Nottingham on British television's *ROBIN HOOD*, plays blackmailer-in-training Bertrand.

counters him in an art gallery that we see this "smiling damned villain" face on. It is a chilling sight.



"The man is more repulsive than any murderer. He is as slitherly and venomous as snakes in the zoo. Hundreds in London turn white at his name." Robert Hardy as Charles Augustus Milverton, *THE MASTER BLACKMAILER*.

You will have deduced by now that I consider *THE MASTER BLACKMAILER* masterful. (You know my methods!) However, I am not suggesting that the piece is perfect. There are several flaws. If Milverton is as evil and destructive as we are led to believe, surely Sherlock Holmes of Baker Street would know of him, just as he knew of Moriarty? Similarly, the detective-as-plumber episode is less convincing than the rest. I feel sure that Holmes, despite his disguise, would not have been able to prowl around the Milverton household as freely as he seems to do. The Aggie/Escott romance is most interesting. Remember how, in the story, Holmes discusses the episode with Watson:

"You'll be interested to hear that I am engaged."

"My dear fellow! I congrat—"

"To Milverton's housemaid."

"Good heavens, Holmes!"

"I wanted information, Watson."

"Surely you have gone too far?"

"It was a most necessary step. I am a plumber with a rising business. Escott by name. I have walked out with her each evening, and I have talked with her. Good heavens those talks!"

To become engaged, even in the decorous Victorian days, one had to go a little further than just talking. Holding hands and kissing must have been part of the process. Therefore, no Sherlockian should raise an eyebrow if Holmes—purely in the pursuit

of information—has to indulge in these conventions. Holmes' first screen embrace is touchingly handled. The shy Escott at first confesses that he does not know how to kiss. It's left to Aggie to take matters into her own hands. Jeremy Brett is helped here by a splendid performance from Sophie Thompson, sister of Emma (star of 1991's *DEAD AGAIN*). It must be admitted that Brett's disguise as Escott is not one of his most convincing, the working-class accent roaming the British Isles somewhat.

Irritating, too, is Holmes' brusque and cavalier manner with Mrs. Hudson (Rosalie Williams), dismissing her as though she were an errant chambermaid. This is not how the stories lead us to believe that Holmes behaved toward his landlady. The saving grace in these scenes is the smile that lights on the lady's face, as though to indicate her knowledge that Holmes doesn't really mean it, and that his apparent rudeness is part of a game he plays with her.

The film is lusciously photographed and costumed, with Patrick Gowers coming up trumps again with a glorious score. Jeremy Brett had nothing but praise for director Peter Hammond's handling of the project. I suppose Hammond's visuals are somewhat flashy for many, and his apparent obsession with symmetry and the use of reflections can be overdone, but he imbues this TV movie with the gloss and grandeur of a big-screen film.

Some Sherlockians have complained of lost moments from the story, principally the scene near the end in which Lestrade arrives at Baker Street to enlist Holmes' assistance in tracking down the two intruders who murdered Charles Augustus Milverton. You remember—it's the one in which Lestrade, recounting what one of the fugitives looks like, observes, "It might



be a description of Watson." Well, I can reveal to *Scarlet Street* readers that this scene appeared in the original screenplay and was actually filmed. Indeed, the episode was presented in a fascinating way: Immediately after Holmes and Watson depart from Appledore Towers, after burning Milverton's cache of indiscreet missives, we cut straight to Baker Street and the arrival of Lestrade (Colin Jeavons). As he recounts what happened the previous night, we see a flashback of Holmes and Watson's escape over the wall and across the heath. On paper it seems to work remarkably well. So why was it cut? It would appear that both Jeremy Paul and Peter Hammond thought that the sly humor in the scene tended to trivialize the drama that preceded it and reduced the power of the Milverton death scene.

The closing episode featuring the auction of Milverton's objets d'art is based on what happened when Charles Augustus Howell's goods and chattels were sold off. A whole array of noble names sent minions to bid for certain pieces in the hope of snapping up items which might conceal evidence of their indiscretions. Thus, when Holmes sees Bertrand (Nickolas Grace), supplier of secrets, and, in essence, Milverton's successor, bidding for the bust of Athene, the detective feels sure that it contains some secret. It transpires that he is wrong, but as he gazes at the smashed pieces in the grate, he glimpses a burning ember, glowing brightly. It is the symbol of blackmail, the parasitic force that still lives, still survives, despite the death of one of its most powerful agents, the most dangerous man in London, Charles Augustus Milverton.



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Ray Harryhausen has been voted the Gordon E. Sawyer Award by the Board of Governors of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

Harryhausen is the ninth recipient of the award. Its purpose is to recognize long-term accomplishments by an individual "whose technological contributions have brought credit to the industry". The award, an Oscar statuette, is named in honor of the multiple Academy Award-winning former sound director of the Samuel Goldwyn Studios.

In the more than 50 years he has spent animating three-dimensional screen fantasies, Ray Harryhausen's name has become synonymous with spectacular special effects. He pioneered and developed many of the stop-motion techniques that have become today's industry standards.

Born in Southern California, he attended City College in Los Angeles and studied dramatics, photography, and sculpture.

In 1933 he saw the original KING KONG, which inspired him to a career in filmmaking. Early experiments in 16mm won him his first job with George Pal's animated "Puppetoons." He served with the Army Signal Corps in World War II and in 1946 worked on his first feature, MIGHTY JOE YOUNG, as head animator and assistant to Willis O'Brien. In association with producer Charles Schneer, he made IT CAME FROM BENEATH THE SEA, THE 7TH VOYAGE OF SINBAD, JASON AND THE ARGONAUTS, and CLASH OF THE TITANS among others.

His body of work has been celebrated by exhibits at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, The Museum of The Moving Image in London, and the Frankfurt Museum in Germany. The Gordon E. Sawyer Award will be presented to Harryhausen at the Academy's Scientific or Technical Awards ceremonies on March 7, 1992.



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SEE PAGE 14!

★ ★ ★
De Mille
on a Shoestring:
★ Irwin Allen's ★

★ THE BIG
★ CIRCUS ★

by
Richard
Valley



76K



Photo courtesy of Cinemond/San Francisco.

What are these people looking at? LEFT TO RIGHT: Vincent Price, Gilbert Roland, Rhonda Fleming, Victor Mature, Red Buttons, Kathryn Grant, David Nelson, and Peter Lorre.

In 1952, laboring under the delusion that big-top impresario John Ringling North was one of the lesser-known Biblical prophets, master showman Cecil B. De Mille deserted the backlot Holy Land of *THE TEN COMMANDMENTS* (1923), *THE KING OF KINGS* (1927), *THE SIGN OF THE CROSS* (1932), and *SAMSON AND DELILAH* (1949) to run off with the circus. The circus was the Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey, and the result was *THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH*, a big-budget blockbuster starring Betty Hutton, Cornel Wilde, Charlton Heston, Dorothy Lamour, Gloria Grahame, and, as "Buttons, a clown", James Stewart. The film, splashy and fun in spite of De Mille's godlike directorial touch, was a smash hit that went on to cop an Oscar for best picture. (Trivia buffs take note: it's the only motion picture featuring Bing Crosby, Bob Hope, and Dorothy Lamour to win that prestigious little fellow. Crosby and Hope, you ask? Watch the on-screen audience when Dottie does her hula dance.) Seven years later (the year, in fact, of De Mille's death), movie-goers were treated to another cotton-candy extravaganza that entertained, despite a tighter budget and "lesser" luminaries, at least as much as C. B.'s elephantine spectacle. This was Irwin Allen's *THE BIG CIRCUS*, and it had the added charm of being, in part, a murder mystery.

The film's story is everything one expects to find on a celluloid trek to the big top. Hank Whirling, having borrowed a large sum of money to take his acts on the road, is forced to contend with

Randy Sherman, a bank-appointed accountant, and beautiful press agent Helen Harrison, whose job skills grate on Whirling's masculine ego. Helen, however, turns out to be the least of Hank's worries: a series of dangerous incidents, smacking of sabotage by rival show owner Borman, threatens to destroy the Whirling Circus before the loan is repaid. Loosed lions, flash fires, and a train wreck killing Mama (one-third of the Flying Colinos) cripple the show and send Mama's husband, Zach, into a self-pitying tailspin. The grief-stricken aerial star agrees to cross Niagara Falls on a tightwire in order to garner much-needed publicity, but vows to kill Hank over the latter's seemingly callous attitude toward Mama's death. (Hank, it turns out, has adopted a hard line so that Zach won't lose his nerve on the wire.) The stunt is a great success, but Zach's efforts prove fruitless when New York, the next stop on the tour, is hit by a newspaper strike. (People read newspapers back in 1959.) Meanwhile, the sabotage continues. Clearly a Borman underling has infiltrated the Whirling show, but who is it? Can it be Hans Hagenfeld, the faintly sinister ringmaster? He's always around, looking furtive, after each "accident". Or can it be Skeeter, the drunken clown? He has a mysterious air about him. Hank hasn't time to unravel the riddle: in a desperate bid to pay off his creditors, he's arranged to have top TV personality Steve ("Hi ho, Steverino") Allen broadcast an entire circus performance. That night, on national television, Mama Colino's killer is unmasked: it's Tommy Gordon, Zach's trusted catcher, who, trapped by the police following a failed attempt to murder Hank's sister Jeannie, ensures high ratings by plunging to his death in full view of the TV audience (providing, that is, the network hasn't cut to a commer-

Richard Valley is an award-winning playwright and Editor-in-Chief of Scarlet Street.

cial). The Whirling Circus is saved; Hank gets Helen; Randy gets Jeannie; Skeeter, presumably, gets to toast them at their weddings.

On the printed page—or even on the screen—the plot of *THE BIG CIRCUS* seems pretty simple-minded. Yet there *is* another way to look at it, and the key lies in one of Irwin Allen's casting decisions. By no stretch of the imagination could the late Allen, writer, producer, and occasionally director of such sci-fi hits as *THE LOST WORLD* (1960), *VOYAGE TO THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA* (1961), and TV's *LOST IN SPACE* (1965–1968), be considered a subversive filmmaker, but in 1959 the future “Master of Disaster” made, in *THE BIG CIRCUS*, a deceptively frothy film that sought to crack the backbone of Our American Way of Life. The crafty producer turned David Nelson, the blonde, blue-eyed, fresh-faced young actor best known for his role of David Nelson on radio and television's *THE ADVENTURES OF OZZIE AND HARRIET* (1944–1966), into Tommy Gordon, a blonde, blue-eyed, fresh-faced young psychopath newly sprung from a hospital for the criminally insane. That's right: David Nelson, who weekly traded low-key quips with brother Ricky on America's foremost family sit-com, was revealed, by Allen, to be a card-carrying loony capable of trashing an entire train. David Nelson, who in his TV incarnation grew up to practice law, was shown, in Cinemascope and Technicolor, trying to kill Kathryn Grant (as Jeannie) by dropping her from a trapeze into the wide-eyed faces of the circus fans below. (What a heartless way to treat a woman who, just recently, had become the second Mrs. Bing Crosby.) Allen's casting coup was stunning in its audacity, appalling in its anarchy. Why, it was enough to bust the very mainspring of President Dwight D. Eisenhower's all-too-tightly-wound nation.

Okay, I'm exaggerating. Still, Nelson's quite good, if sorely under-exposed, in *THE BIG CIRCUS*, pulling out all the histrionic stops in the flick's final moments before meeting the high-flying doom he'd so ignominiously planned for Mrs. Crosby. It's perhaps his best performance, and it launched for the pleasant, self-effacing actor a love for the circus that endures to this day. Nor was it his first encounter with casting against type: Nelson's movie career,

up to and including his recent cameo in John Waters' *CRY-BABY* (1990), belies his clean-cut, apple-pie image as Ozzie and Harriet's oldest boy. *HERE COMES THE NELSONS* (1952) was little more than a theatrical pilot for the subsequent TV series, it's true, but the actor followed it in 1957 with the film version of another thorn in the Eisenhower era's conformist sensibilities: the novel *Peyton Place*. Granted, Nelson took no active part in the toned-down, skinny-dipping sexcapades of the Jerry Wald production, but the fictional New England mill town was, morally, miles away from the Nelson clan's Never Never Land. (One example of a typical Tinseltown whitewash: the film's Rodney Harrington, played by Barry Coe, dies a hero in World War II; in the book, author Grace Metalious snuffs poor Rod in a crash brought on by his desire to drive and have sex simultaneously.) In 1959, the year of *THE BIG CIRCUS*, Nelson was featured in *THE REMARKABLE MR. PENNYPACKER*, an innocuous Clifton Webb comedy that nevertheless claimed bigamy as its theme, and *DAY OF THE OUTLAW*, in which, echoing brother Ricky's role in Howard Hawk's *RIO BRAVO* (also 1959), he played a gunslinger. With these credentials, and considering the contempt in which the profession is often held, is it any wonder David Nelson's TV counterpart ultimately became a lawyer?

Of course, Nelson's dramatic turnabout wasn't the sole reason to catch *THE BIG CIRCUS*. His co-stars, besides Grant, included Victor Mature (as Hank), Rhonda Fleming (as Helen), Red Buttons (as Randy), Gilbert Roland (as Zach), and two stars enormously popular with devotees of mystery and horror: Vincent Price and Peter Lorre (as Hans and Skeeter, respectively).

In Price and Lorre, *THE BIG CIRCUS* had two of Hollywood's legendary bad guys on call as fire-engine-red herings. Dubbed “The Merchants of Menace” by *Famous Monsters of Filmland* editor Forry Ackerman in the early 60s, the pair starred in American International's *TALES OF TERROR* (1962), *THE RAVEN* (1963), and *THE COMEDY OF TERRORS* (1964). Strangling buxom wives, burying Basil Rathbone alive, and even endeavoring to poison horror king Boris Karloff, the tall, silken



© 1959, Allied Artists Pictures Corp.

LEFT: A diminutive circus clown (Angelo Rossitto) watches in wonder as Victor Mature performs his celebrated Maurice Chevalier impression: a scene you *won't* find in *THE BIG CIRCUS*. **RIGHT:** Vincent Price, the most likely suspect in *THE BIG CIRCUS*, blows the whistle on another act of violence.

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Price and the short, sad-faced Lorre prowled the cramped studio byways as a sort of malign Abbott and Costello. Irwin Allen's *THE STORY OF MANKIND* (1957), that "all-star" history of Homo sapiens with Price as Mr. Scratch (arguing the case against our race, opposite Ronald Colman's Spirit of Man) and Lorre as Nero ("Burn! Burn, my glorious Rome!"), had actually marked the gruesome twosome's first co-starring stint, although they shared no scenes. Two years later, when Allen required a devious duo to divert suspicion from baby-faced Nelson, Price and Lorre joined the circus. Naturally, they're great fun to have around, but, like Nelson, they aren't given very much to do.

As whirlwind Hank Whirling, Victor Mature (whose 1949 *De Mille* epic *SAMSON AND DELILAH* Groucho Marx claimed to loathe because "the leading man's bust is bigger than the leading lady's") is typically vigorous and much more the showman than Charlton Heston in a similar role in *THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH*. Rhonda Fleming, Gilbert Roland, and Adele Mara (as Mama) lend firm support, as does second-billed Red Buttons (the recipient, two years earlier, of an Academy Award for Best Supporting Actor for his role in *SAYONARA*). Kathryn Grant is pert and pretty in her quiet moments, but appears somewhat crazed in her reactions to the numerous circus disasters.

Producer Allen hired equipment from five small shows to create the Whirling Circus, filling the MGM backlot, where the Allied Artists release was lensed, with camels, elephants, horses, and acrobats. Director Joseph Newman, known primarily for directing 1955's *THIS ISLAND EARTH*, keeps the whole shebang rolling briskly along, but is hampered by a budget prohibiting such costly on-screen occurrences as the mandatory train wreck. (Look to *De Mille* if you must take a ride on the Reading.) *THE BIG CIRCUS'* centerpiece, Zach Colino's wire walk, is unrealistically conveyed via matte work and rear projection, but the climactic chase, in which Tommy muffs his mad leap to freedom, is the stuff circus stunts are made of.

In its tight-budgeted simplicity and relatively brief running time (108 minutes, compared to *THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH's* endless 153), *THE BIG CIRCUS* is light entertainment at its best, catching the charm of circus life as felicitously as does its illustrious predecessor. If nothing else, Irwin Allen's mini-epic gives viewers their sole opportunity to watch David Nelson, modest exemplar of what, in the 50s, had yet to become known as the Nuclear Family, bust loose in a wild homicidal spree guaranteed to thrill children of all ages.



THE BIG CIRCUS

Credits

A Saratoga-Vic Mature Productions, Inc. Picture. Released by Allied Artists. Producers: Irwin Allen, Victor Mature. Director: Joseph M. Newman. Screenplay: Irwin Allen, Charles Bennett, Irving Wallace. Based on a story by Irwin Allen. Cinematographer: Winton Hoch. Editor: Adrienne Fazan. Recording Supervisor: Franklin Milton. Assistant Director: William McGarry. Music: Paul Sawtell, Bert Shefter. Art Director: Albert D'Agostino. Set Decorator: Robert Priestley. Technicolor Color Consultant: Morgan Padelford. Title Song: Sammy Fain, Paul Francis Webster. Sound: Conrad Kahn. Sound Effects: Finn Ulback, Bert Schoenfeld. Costume Designer: Paul Zastupnevich. Choreographer: Barbette.

Cast

Victor Mature (Hank Whirling), Red Buttons (Randy Sherman), Rhonda Fleming (Helen Harrison), Kathryn Grant (Jeannie Whirling), Vincent Price (Hans Hagenfeld), Peter Lorre (Skeeter), David Nelson (Tommy Gordon), Adele Mara (Mama Colino), Howard McNear (Mr. Lomax), Charles Watts (Jonathan Nelson), Steve Allen (Himself), Gilbert Roland (Zach Colino), Angelo Rossitto (Clown), The Young Hugo Zacchini (Human Cannonball), Dick Walker's World-Famous Lion Act, The Flying Alexanders, Gene Mendez (World's Greatest Wire-Walker), The Ronnie Lewis Trio (High-Ladder Equilibrists), The Jungle Land Elephants, Tex Carr and his Chimpanzees, Dick Berg's Movieland Seals.



David Nelson (as Tommy Gordon) with Adele Mara (as Mama Colino, the woman he murders in *THE BIG CIRCUS*).

Scarlet Street: We want to tell you that you're the star of one of our favorite circus movies, *THE BIG CIRCUS*.

David Nelson: Oh, thank you! (Laughs) I hope your memory is good, because mine is clouded.

SS: Well, we're sure you'll remember this. How did you first become interested in the circus? Was it the film that did it?

DN: Yes, it really was the film. I was an actor at the time on *THE ADVENTURES OF OZZIE AND HARRIET*, and had done a couple of features at 20th Century Fox. Then I went in to see them about doing this part. It was an Irwin Allen picture and I, fortunately, got cast in the role of the catch-

er. So that was the start of my interest in the trapeze. As a matter of fact, there were a couple of us who needed rudimentary instruction, even though doubles did everything, so that we would look like we knew what we

were doing when we went up there.

SS: Well, certainly in the close-ups, that's you. But everything seen from a distance was performed by stunt people?

DN: Right. All the tricks and things like that were stunt people. They actually had a rigging set up which was much closer to the ground. There was a chase scene where I had to go on top of the rigging, so some of that is me and the rest is Bobby Yerkin, who became a good friend of mine. He doubled me during the show. At that time, he was working with Faye Alexander, who did all the doubling for Tony Curtis in *TRAPEZE*. Faye was the flyer who doubled Gilbert Roland, and Bobby doubled me.

CIRCUS BOY

an interview with

David Nelson

by Richard Valley

David Nelson grew up before our very eyes (or in the case of his radio career, before our very ears). *THE ADVENTURES OF OZZIE AND HARRIET*, starring David's Mom and Dad, made its radio debut in 1944. David and brother Ricky were originally played by child actors, but the genuine articles took over the roles in 1949. From then until 1966, the Nelson family was constantly before the public, but David had another career—two careers, in fact—on screen and on the trapeze. Now president of Casablanca Productions, a commercial production company, David Nelson took time out from his busy schedule to reminisce with *Scarlet Street* about his career in the circus...

SS: Was *THE BIG CIRCUS* a real circus or individual acts brought together for the movie?

DN: Really, individual acts that were brought to MGM to work in the picture. They were legitimate acts, all of them. I remember a fellow named Barbettes who was the overall tech advisor on the film. The people who Irwin Allen hired were all circus people. Bobby Yerkin, Faye Alexander; Pat Anthony, I think, did the lion act. When I physically got involved and interested and kept working out after the picture was over, I ended up being fortunate enough to work with a lot of those people in different shows.

SS: Everyone remembers you and your brother Rick from *OZZIE AND HARRIET*. It's clean, wholesome, family entertainment. Then the first two movies we ever saw you in were *PEYTON PLACE*, which was based on one of the most scandalous books of the 50s, and *THE BIG CIRCUS*, in which you turn out to be a psychopathic killer! And your brother, in *RIO BRAVO*, played a hired gunslinger! Was there a



Ted Carter (David Nelson) kisses Selena Cross (Hope Lange) goodnight on a porch in 1957's PEYTON PLACE, moments before she's raped by her stepfather. (Well, it is Peyton Place.)

conscious effort, when you went into films, to break with your image?

DN: Not necessarily on my part. There was on the part of THE BIG CIRCUS producers; as a matter of fact, they felt that I would be the least obvious suspect. (Laughs) Irwin Allen started to get a little nervous that people would suspect too early that I was the killer, so he started eliminating my lines from the script.

SS: You do seem to disappear in the middle of the film.

DN: It was the joke around the show that I had become a method extra. (Laughs)

SS: It's obvious, too, that they build up Vincent Price to be the most obvious suspect. Whenever there's any discussion about who's sabotaging the circus, the camera cuts to a close-up of Price looking furtive.

DN: (Laughs) Right! And, of course, Peter Lorre was there so you would maybe suspect him.

SS: That's true, too. What was it like to work with Price and Lorre?

DN: Oh, they were wonderful. Actually, I remembered them years previous to that in various shows with my parents. Mostly radio in those days, and Vincent and Peter were big stars. There was a show, YOUR STAR OF STARS or something like that, and my father's orchestra was on it. My mother was also a part of it, so they worked together on some of those shows. They all remembered me as little David when I was three or four, so it was fun for me. It was wonderful to sit with Peter Lorre and talk about the Bogart days and things like that. He loved to talk about it, and he didn't have that major a role, either, so we had a lot of time to sit around and talk.

SS: You play your final crazed scenes in THE BIG CIRCUS especially well. Was it difficult to get into the character of a panic-stricken lunatic?

DN: No, it really wasn't. Ask any actor. Despite what the audience would think, actors love to either go crazy or break into hysterical crying scenes. It's probably the easiest thing in the world to do. The toughest is light comedy and the easiest, at least in my case, is to go crazy. (Laughs)

SS: After all those years of light comedy, going nuts was a snap.

DN: All your fears that build up, your hysteria at thinking they won't let you through the gate when you come to work in the morning; you use all that.

SS: Were you offered any other psychopathic killers on the strength of this film?

DN: Not really psychopathic killers. I did do a picture called DAY OF THE OUTLAW, but I was kind of a good outlaw. That was with Burl Ives, and we became good friends on that. He had a subsequent series, which was my first outside directing job.

SS: O.K. CRACKERBEE?

DN: Yeah.

SS: You said you first became interested in the circus through the film. Then you went on to appear in real circuses. Can you tell us about that?

DN: Well, basically, I started to do it to work out. I hadn't been out of school that long, and I had always played sports and been in fairly good condition. Now, a couple of years had passed and I was starting to get a little roll, and I thought this was a great way to work out and have fun, too. Maybe learn something at the same time. My brother was singing, and he was doing state

fairs during the summer and I thought, "Gee, this would be fun, to be able to put a trapeze act together and play state fairs and circuses". So, basically, that's what happened. At first, I didn't have an idea of turning it into any kind of sub-profession, but as I got a little more proficient, it got to the point where we could actually compete with other acts. The technical directors for the trapeze part of THE BIG CIRCUS were Del Graham and his wife Babs, who taught all the actors how to look decent. After the picture was over, they got a place out in Thousand Oaks, and I'd go out after work on OZZIE AND HARRIET and swing and practice and work out with them. And it so happened that Del's catcher needed to go back to Ohio, and that left him without a catcher. They had a couple of dates lined up, so he asked me to do it. **SS:** Catching is especially hard, isn't it? It seems that the audience oohs and aahs at the flyers, but if you don't catch correctly they can pull you right off the trapeze.

DN: The whole act is really a team effort. If either one of you screws up, it's into the net. I have a fear of heights, so my first challenge was to be able to go up that high, even for some of the long shots.

SS: You're afraid of heights and you were doing that!

DN: (Laughs) Yeah. That was the first thing I had to get over. That never really left me. Anytime we went in to hang the rigging, the rafters were like 95 feet off the ground, so it was always a challenge for me.

SS: How long did it take you to grasp the rhythm and so forth?

DN: I think it took me a good six to eight months before I felt I was really proficient



1959 was a busy year for gunslingers. While brother Ricky Nelson hired out to John Wayne in RIO BRAVO, David appeared in DAY OF THE OUTLAW.



David Nelson took his second and last cinematic trip to the circus in *THE BIG SHOW* (1961) with Esther Williams and Cliff Robertson.

enough to catch anything more than simple tricks. Later there was another challenge because of a show called *CIRCUS OF THE STARS*. I did that for about seven years as a catcher; I would catch other celebrities, who really didn't have any experience. Doing a show once a year and trying to get into shape within four weeks was a challenge. That was more of a challenge than doing a full act.

SS: Did you say you did some of the trapeze work with your brother?

DN: Rick came out a couple of times when I was working out, so we got him to go up, and he actually ended up being able to do a couple of tricks. He was taller than I was; consequently it looked a little strange. I was a little heavier, but we were about the same weight, so we could really only do simple tricks. I did a show in Hawaii with Keith Hernandez. Rick was in Hawaii at the same time with *THE WACKIEST SHIP IN THE ARMY*, so one evening he brought the producer and the director over to the show. It was kind of a surprise; he took off his shirt and he was dressed in his tights and he went up and did a couple of tricks. Much to the consternation of the producer and the director!

SS: We recently learned that there was a circus episode of *OZZIE AND HARRIET* with the trapeze. Did both of you do that, too?

DN: Yes, we did.

SS: How did that fit into the show's format?

DN: That was one of those things where my father sometimes borrowed from what Rick and I were doing—whether it be motorcycles, or swimming, or whatever it was—and stuck it in the story line of *OZZIE AND HARRIET*. He'd normally do that by way of a dream sequence. So the circus portion of that show was like a dream. I had to serve a summons on somebody who was work-

ing in the circus. So I served the summons on the trapeze.

SS: Now, you toured, after *THE BIG CIRCUS*, for six years?

DN: That's about right. It was mostly during the summertime, when we were on hiatus. But I did get another circus picture called *THE BIG SHOW* in Germany. I was playing the part of a soldier, and this was a German circus, so we shot the whole picture in Munich. It gave me a chance to catch an older guy named Pierre Alesi, who was one of the first guys in Europe to do a triple. He was in his 60s at that time and still in great shape. I had taken my flyer to Germany with me, as my stand-in, so in the evening we'd be the extra added attraction. The American trapeze act. That was a lot of fun.

SS: You said *THE BIG SHOW*? We've never seen that one.

DN: Esther Williams, Cliff Robertson...

SS: You mentioned the triple, in which the flyer somersaults three times before being caught. For the longest time, that was considered an impossible trick, wasn't it?

DN: Well, it was very rare, but it wasn't like people couldn't do it. Once you did, though, it was almost demanded, and to do a triple, three shows a day, was a little bit different than just doing one once in a while. I think the first person to do it consistently was Alfredo Cadona. He worked with his brother Raoul and they performed with Ringling Broth-

ers. Cadona used to do a triple, hit the net, bounce out and hit the floor. They'd start to carry him off and he'd fight the guys off, go back up on the trapeze, and do the triple again and catch it.

SS: Incredible! Doing the triple, you work up such speed that you're actually going about 60 mph, aren't you?

DN: That's true. Of course, nowadays the American acts are a bit more athletic in terms of tricks, and they're doing quads and four-and-a-halves.

SS: One last question about *THE BIG CIRCUS*: Why is it that, whenever a killer is trying to escape the law, he goes up? You climb up onto the rigging and there's no way out up there.

DN: (Laughs) There are some films where they end up down in the catacombs, racing around underground.

SS: Still, it's either up or down. It's never a straight line down the street.

DN: (Laughs) Yeah, right. My guess is it's more exciting. Nowadays, with car-chase scenes, you can go in all directions.



The Flying Nelsons! Rick Nelson sometimes joined David on the trapeze, appearing at state fairs across the country and in one memorable episode of *THE ADVENTURES OF OZZIE AND HARRIET*.

Photo Courtesy of David Nelson



Step right up! Step right up! See the Wonders of the Ages! *Scarlet Street* takes you on a grisly, gawdy, guided tour of our star-strangled midway! See Boris Karloff go ape! Joan Crawford go berserk! Bela Lugosi rue the morgue! See the Spider Woman, the Snake Man, the Chicken Lady, and the Geek! It's the *Scarlet Street* Sideshow, and it's all yours for the price of one thick issue! Gentlemen, no smoking inside the tent! Ladies, kindly remove your heads...

FLESH AND FANTASY

Taking up residence in Hollywood during the war years, the celebrated French director Julien Duvivier followed his first omnibus film, 20th Century Fox's *TALES OF MANHATTAN* (1942), with yet another: the whimsical *FLESH AND FANTASY* (1943) for Universal. The picture's three episodes share the high-minded theme of man's innate ability to rise above his fate, but, fortunately, Duvivier keeps the tone of the picture light and irreverent. The movie is nothing short of an elaborate cinematic sleight-of-hand, an excuse to trot out a stellar cast and dazzling technique in a great big Hollywood grab-bag. It's a self-conscious, semi-artistic attempt to entrance an audience: a game plan usually doomed to failure, but, for two-thirds of its length, *FLESH AND FANTASY* beguilingly realizes its ambitions.

The three disparate tales are connected by bridging scenes featuring Robert Benchley as a superstitious but straight-laced banker rattled by a fortune-teller's dire predictions. Egged on by a fellow member of his club, Benchley's self-therapy begins by reading from an anthology of quasi-supernatural stories. The grey drawing-room setting quickly dissolves and we are plunged into a Mardi Gras cel-

ebration, with ornately costumed merry-makers dancing down serpentine streets and in and out of buildings. It's a properly bewitching background for the Cinderella-inspired tale of a homely dressmaker (Betty Field) who finds love (in the form of Robert Cummings) and her own inner beauty when tricked by a mysterious stranger (Edgar Barrier) into finally abandoning her bitter self-loathing. The second episode is Oscar Wilde's short story "Lord Arthur Saville's Crime" gussied up as a fanciful film noir. A fortune-teller, played by the anything-but-mystical Thomas Mitchell, predicts that his client, Edward G. Robinson, will commit murder. The twist ending of the tale proves that the only real prophesies are the self-fulfilling ones. So far, so good, but the last story turns out to be the one puff piece on the program—a glossy but rather shapeless romance that even such excellent players as Charles Boyer and Barbara Stanwyck can't salvage. Boyer (who co-produced the film) is a circus high-wire walker who loses his nerve when plagued by recurring nightmares in which he falls to his death while performing his act. On a trans-Atlantic ocean liner, he meets Stanwyck, whom he recognizes as the woman in his disturbing

fantasies. When the couple fall in love, the nightmare is one step closer to reality.

FLESH AND FANTASY may seem like a poor relation to the more macabre and better-regarded British omnibus classic *DEAD OF NIGHT* (1945), but the movie is sumptuous, well-crafted, and brilliantly photographed (by Paul Ivano and Stanley Cortez). It stacks up as one of Universal's more successful attempts to produce a top-of-the-line feature.

—Michael Brunas



Charles Boyer and Barbara Stanwyck

NIGHT TIDE

Director/writer Curtis Harrington began his career with low-budget avant garde experimental films along the lines of several Kenneth Anger productions of the late 50s. *NIGHT TIDE* (1963) was Harrington's attempt to cross into the mainstream; it was only partially successful.

Sailor Johnny Drake (25-year-old Dennis Hopper) visits a small boardwalk amusement park in California. There, he meets and falls in love with the lovely, mysterious Mora (Linda Lawson), who is listening to some "beat" music at a coffee shop. A strange old woman approaches Mora, mutters something in a foreign language, and frightens her into leaving the restaurant. Johnny walks Mora home, which in her case is a building housing the merry-go-round. Johnny asks to be invited up; he isn't.

Bright and early the next day, Johnny returns to the park, where he meets the manager of the merry-go-round (Tom Dillon) and his granddaughter, Ellen (Luana Anders). Johnny asks to see Mora. Suspicious, the manager asks if Johnny has known Mora long. Johnny says that he has.

Joining Mora for breakfast, Johnny is offered fish (she loves seafood). Mora tells Johnny that she makes her living as an amusement-pier attraction: namely, a mermaid. This surprises him, but not as much as Mora's trick of having a wild sea gull fly into her arms.

Mora introduces Johnny to Captain Murdock (Gavin Muir), the show's barker. When he was captain of his own vessel, Murdock found Mora on an island; he is now her mentor and guardian. Entering the exhibit, Johnny finds Mora, in full mermaid regalia, in a glass tank that reflects light as if it is filled with water.

Johnny and Mora spend more and more time together. One night they attend a beach party, where Mora begins to dance. As the drum beat increases, her dance becomes more frenzied until, finally, she passes out. At Mora's home the next day, Johnny meets Lieutenant Henderson (H. E. West). The policeman leaves, and Ellen explains that he is investigating Mora. (It seems that she has had two boyfriends who were found washed up on the beach, dead.) Spying the strange old woman from the coffee house, Johnny gives chase, ending up at Murdock's home. Murdock tells Johnny the legend of the sirens, mermaids who lure sailors to their door. Mora, Murdock



Linda Lawson and Dennis Hopper in NIGHT TIDE.

claims, belongs to that ancient race. Johnny asks about the old woman, but Murdock knows nothing about her. The captain passes out from drink, and Johnny finds Mora in her room upstairs. She explains that the old woman is one of the sirens, there to remind Mora that she must return to the sea.

Later, a fortune teller reads Johnny's future. The tarot cards show Johnny entering dangerous territory. Johnny dreams that Mora changes into an octopus and strangles him. He awakens to find her beneath the pier, the waters rising around her. Johnny rushes in and rescues her.

At a bath house, Johnny again meets the captain, who warns Johnny to watch Mora more closely: the moon is now full, and the tide is higher. Mora prepares to go diving at night. Johnny joins her, but his equipment malfunctions, nearly drowning him. Mora sadly watches him struggle to the surface; she then swims off underwater. Later that night, Johnny dreams of Mora laughing as she is swept off by the tides. He wakes up and rushes to the sideshow, where Murdock is still hawking his attraction. Rushing into the exhibit, Johnny looks into the tank and finds Mora, dead, her hair floating on the water. Murdock, holding a pistol, confronts Johnny, claiming that the boy killed Mora. They struggle, the gun goes off, and two policemen rush in.

At police headquarters, the captain confesses his love for Mora, and that he had told her the story of the sirens so she would stay away from men. He killed her suitors, convincing Mora that she had done so. Murdock thinks that, rather than kill Johnny, Mora committed suicide.

Asked about the strange old woman, the captain denies any knowledge of her. As the military police lead Johnny away (is he A.W.O.L.?), Ellen asks him to come see her again; he promises to do so.

The film's closing quote comes from the Poe poem "Annabel Lee": "And so, in the night tide, I lie down by the side, my darling—my darling—my life and my bride, in her sepulchre there by the sea, in her tomb by the sounding sea."

A strange film that transcends its low-budget flaws—camera noise is quite audible in several scenes—*NIGHT TIDE* calls to mind Val Lewton's *CAT PEOPLE* (1942). Mora, descended from an ancient race forbidden to love human beings on pain of killing those they love, has a precedent in *CAT PEOPLE*'s Irina (Simone Simon). Even the strange old woman who periodically reminds Mora of her heritage echoes the feline foreigner played by Elizabeth Russell in the earlier film. Both *NIGHT TIDE* and *CAT PEOPLE* conclude on a note of uncertainty: Do these creatures really exist?

NIGHT TIDE is designed around water images—usually a sign of life, but in this film a foreboding of death. Mora's room overlooking the ocean; the captain's home in Venice, California; the tarot reading in which the crab card, representing danger, is drawn; Johnny's seafaring background; and even the meal that Mora serves Johnny are among the film's many references to the sea.

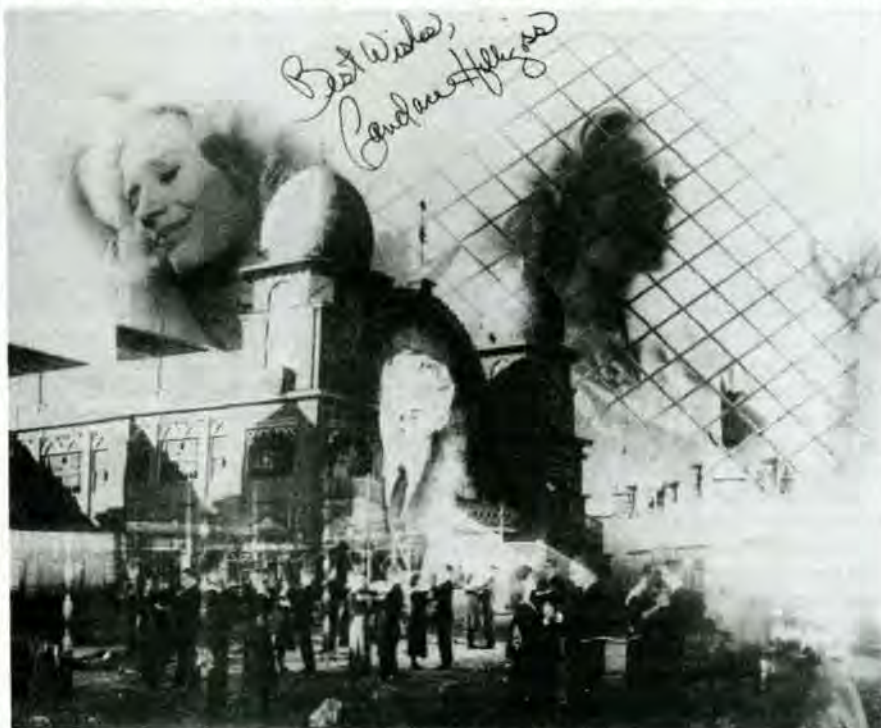
NIGHT TIDE is no classic, but it is a hypnotic, lyrical film that's recommended for fantasy fans who prefer subtle chills to more visceral thrills.

—Kevin G. Shinnick

Carnival of Souls

Anyone who has ever seen this film will never look at a desolate, run-down amusement park in quite the same way again. The leading lady cheats death when her car plunges into a river, killing her three companions. Soon she finds herself being shadowed by a cream-complexioned phantom, an obvious emissary from the Great Beyond, who wants to reclaim her. Suffering from disturbing lapses in which she loses all contact with reality, the frantic girl begins to question

of how to shoot a quality horror film on a shoestring. Herk Harvey, an industrial filmmaker who turned his considerable talents to this single venture into feature films, gets the most from his limited resources. Each and every cost-cutting device, from the clumsy editing to the stifling drabness of the authentic locations (the film was shot in Lawrence) to the funereal solo organ mournfully droning on the soundtrack, works to sustain an oppressive and genuinely eerie mood that would have



CARNIVAL OF SOULS

her own sanity. Drawn instinctively to an abandoned lakeside fun fair, she stumbles upon an elegant but hair-raising Danse Macabre for the dead, who descend upon her, forcing her into their ranks.

This quirky, no-budget picture was barely released, but went on to become one of the most respectable "cult" movies ever made after it was sold to television in the late 60s. Thanks to newly struck, pristine prints, which are a marked improvement over often-murky public-domain videos that show the film to poor advantage, its recent theatrical revival has enhanced its reputation even further.

Finally restored, CARNIVAL OF SOULS emerges as a textbook example

been near-impossible to duplicate on a Hollywood soundstage. Few horror movies deliver their shocks as economically as CARNIVAL OF SOULS; Harvey manages to achieve wonderfully nightmarish effects in the climax by merely undercranking the camera.

The film is almost a one-woman show for Candace Hilligoss, an unknown New York actress who got her 15 minutes of fame playing the doomed heroine. Saddled with a character who literally is a blank, Hilligoss delivers a first-rate performance and was fully deserving of the career breaks that, sadly, never came her way.

—Michael Brunas

Carnival of Souls

Big-top settings provided a vivid backdrop in HE WHO GETS SLAPPED (1924), the first-ever MGM production and a formula vehicle for that most overrated of horror film stars, Lon Chaney. This silent-vintage museum piece falls into the too-familiar Chaney pattern, with the legendary "Man of a Thousand Faces" being victimized, taking on a bizarre new identity, wreaking murderous vengeance upon his former tormentors, and then dying a semi-noble death.

Early on, Chaney is the bearded Paul Beaumont, a scientist who figures out the secret of life, or something equally monumental (if vague). However, before he can present his findings to the world, a villainous baron (Marc McDermott) steals Chaney's wife and advances Chaney's new-fangled theories to a scientific academy as

HE WHO GETS SLAPPED

though they were his own. Chaney tries to convince the academics that these were his discoveries, evoking gales of laughter; in what must only be described as Chaney logic, the crestfallen scholar decides that the best way to get even is to become a clown. (Boy, that's showin' 'em, Lon!) In his circus act, the incognito Chaney becomes He, a clown whom the other clowns actually slap, punch, and otherwise manhandle while the big-top audience unaccountably roars with laughter; He envisions his fellow clowns as the scientific academy. By yet another grotesque and impossible plot turn (in a story already groaning under the weight of them), the dastardly baron next shows up at the circus, conspiring with a seedy count (Tully Marshall) to "buy" the count's daughter (Norma Shearer), a circus performer loved by Lon! Occasionally intercut throughout this hodgepodge are shots of a clown spinning a globe on his fingertip like a basketball while busting a gut laughing.

Adapted from the play HE, THE ONE WHO GETS SLAPPED, and directed by Swedish émigré Victor Seastrom, HE was popular and profitable and garnered good reviews in 1924, but today comes over as silly, heavy nonsense. In 1934, just as he was completing MGM's THE BARRETTS OF WIMPOLE STREET, Metro producer Irving Thalberg signed Charles Laughton to a personal contract for two pictures, the first earmarked to be a remake of this Chaney production; the film went unmade.

HE WHO GETS SLAPPED is a million dollars' worth of name value (Chaney, Shearer, John Gilbert) and production draped lovingly about the shoulders of a story not worth a plugged nickel.

—Tom Weaver

SIDESHOW

Rod Steiger stars as Carl, a circus roustabout. On his day off, Carl encounters a mysterious woman (Claire Bloom), who proceeds to cover his entire body with illustrations. These are more than just tattoos; stare at one of them long enough and it will envelop you in a story.

This is what happens to a young drifter (Robert Drivas) when he meets **THE ILLUSTRATED MAN** at the beginning of the film. The stories he sees are futuristic tales involving



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a couple dealing with their children in a pre **STAR TREK** holodeck; a bunch of astronauts stranded on a planet where it never stops raining; and the end of the world, when the human race decides to stop living.

All three of the tales presented in this 1969 production involve Steiger, Bloom, and Drivas; unfortunately, the vignettes are every bit as boring and pretentious as the wrap-around segment. Steiger overacts loudly and obnoxiously; Bloom is wasted; and Drivas, who went on to a successful directorial career in the theatre before dying in 1986, barely registers any screen presence. Ray Bradbury, on whose splendid 1951 collection of short stories this mess was based, was reportedly not pleased with the film. I can see why.

—Sean Farrell



THE ILLUSTRATED MAN

TOP RIGHT: Rod Steiger gets the picture from then-wife Claire Bloom. **LEFT:** Robert Drivas learns, during an early morning swim, that **THE ILLUSTRATED MAN**'s tattoos are waterproof.

THE LIVING DAYLIGHTS (1987) was Timothy Dalton's first attempt at James Bond, and so far the jury is still out determining his success. As a villain he's terrific (see last year's much-neglected THE ROCKETEER), but he brings to the Bond role, at least so far, an attitude of impatience and "business first". This may, in-

deed, be closer to the 007 of Ian Fleming's novels, but at the risk of angering some Bond purists, I'm more concerned with how James Bond works on film. It is James Bond's indifference and ability to remain cool despite impending danger that makes him fun to watch. Still, Dalton is fantastic in action sequences, and his willingness to in-

volve himself in hair-raising stunts makes those sequences flow seamlessly. The plot here concerns Bond's suspicion that the defection of General Koscov (Jerome Krabbe) from the KGB is a hoax. Befriending the general's girlfriend (Maryam d'Abo), Bond discovers that Koscov is the mastermind of "Death to Spies".

A carnival in Vienna sets the scene for the best "sacrificial lamb" sequence in some time. The films before and after DAYLIGHTS (1985's A VIEW TO A KILL and 1989's LICENCE TO KILL) have Bond's friends killed much too early in the action to have impact, but the set-up here, especially in such cheery surroundings, pays off. Throughout the story, Bond

THE SPIDER WOMAN

The last reel of this 1944 Sherlock Holmes adventure finds the master sleuth (Basil Rathbone, of course) outfoxed by the title character, Adrea Spedding (Gale Sondergaard), who earns her arachnid alias when it is discovered that she uses spider venom to drive her victims to their destruction. Hiding out in an amusement-park shooting gallery, the so-called female Moriarty has Holmes tied to a life-sized mock-up of Hitler, whose "bull's-eye" heart is actually that of the detective. Narrowly escaping a firing-squad-like execution, the imperiled Holmes slips out of his bonds in a manner that would make Houdini envious, just in time to see his distaff arch-rival whisked away by Scotland Yard in the film's closing moments.

Actually, the ho-hum wrap-up does little justice to an otherwise attractive addition to Universal's updated Sherlock Holmes series of the 40s. The script by Bertram Millhauser owes more to the conventions of Hollywood melodrama than to Conan Doyle, although there is a hint of

"The Adventure of the Dying Detective" in the opening scenes, in which Holmes fakes his death on the Scottish rapids in order to snare the bad guys. Most of the rest of the film's 61 minutes is a protracted cat-and-mouse game with Rathbone and Sondergaard camping it up in an improbable variety of disguises. The cumulative impact of this hokum most likely sent poor Sir Arthur spinning in his grave, but all but the purists should find this romping good fun.

Critics at the time were most receptive to Sondergaard, who chewed her way through enough scenery to land her an Oscar and several nominations in such high-brow movies as ANTHONY ADVERSE (1936) and THE LIFE OF EMILE ZOLA (1937), although she's remembered best these days for flashy "B" movies like this one. Director Roy William Neill, who frequently brought style to his Holmes assignments, seems content to keep out of everyone's way, but it's slickly done and fast-moving.

—Michael Brunas



Adrea Spedding (Gale Sondergaard), flanked by Inspector Lestrade (Dennis Hoey) and Sherlock Holmes (Basil Rathbone), is caught in her own web.

and Agent Saunders (Thomas Wheatley) have tolerated each other, but when Saunders goes out on a limb to meet Bond at the carnival's coffee shop and deliver new information, Bond starts to warm up to him. That, of course, is the precise moment when Saunders is killed by a sliding door (souped up by the bad guys). The fact that his gruesome demise is never actually seen is a fine example of the Bond series' handling of implied violence. Sequences such as this make THE LIVING DAYLIGHTS a better film than the most recent entry, LICENCE TO KILL.

DAYLIGHTS is an atmospheric epic; LICENCE, despite its many attractions, is contemporary. There are enough DIE HARD and LETHAL WEAPON clones for "action picture" audiences, and LICENCE TO KILL unfortunately takes place in *that* world, not Bond's. It will be interesting to see how Bond as a movie entity survives into the next century. Whatever his fate, Broccoli and Co. have been a class act for almost 30 years.

—Paul Scrabo

THE UNHOLY THREE

When Tod Browning first proposed to MGM the possibility of committing a 1917 Clarence Robbins novel to the screen, he was refused. The feeling was that no one would seriously accept the dramatic possibilities of a trio of circus sideshow performers who rob and commit murder; it was comedy material. Browning stated at the time, "I wasn't in the position to convince anybody that I was right and they were wrong." However, Irving Thalberg saw the light, and *THE UNHOLY THREE* proved to be extremely successful.

THE UNHOLY THREE (1925) concerns three performers who band together to commit crimes: a ventriloquist, Professor Echo (Lon Chaney); a strongman, Hercules (Victor McLaglin); and a midget, Tweedledee (Harry Earles). Joined by Rosie O'Grady (Mae Busch), the trio sets up living quarters behind a pet store. Echo, in love with Rosie, poses as her aunt; Tweedledee poses as their baby. Using his talents as a ventriloquist, Echo makes the store's parrots appear to talk. Duped customers buy the birds, take them home, and complain when they don't talk. Echo and Tweedledee go to the customers' homes, purportedly to examine the defective birds, and rob the houses while they're there.

One night Hercules and Tweedledee burglarize a house on their own and murder the homeowner. The police investigate, and a pet-store employee, Hector McDonald (Matt Moore), is arrested. Further complicating matters, Rosie has fallen in love with Hector. Echo decides to pack up, and all involved hide out in a log cabin, bringing a large ape with them. Rosie is greatly saddened by Hector's murder trial and begs Echo to somehow help him. While Echo sits in at the trial, Hercules plans a double cross and tries to get Rosie to go with him. Tweedledee overhears and lets the ape out. Both men are killed, but Rosie escapes. Meanwhile, Echo reveals himself to the judge and makes a full confession, and Hector goes free. Echo is also freed, and frees Rosie from her promise to marry him. The final scene has Echo back in the sideshow with his ventriloquist act.

The 1930 sound remake contains several cast changes, as well as a major alteration in the ending. Chaney and Earles repeat their roles as Echo and Tweedledee. Rosie is played by Lila Lee, Hercules by Ivan Linow, and Hector by Elliot Nugent. Jack Conway replaces Browning as director. The new ending has Echo first appear at the murder trial as himself and, via ventriloquism, announce that Mrs. O'Grady

will appear to testify. Later, on the stand, Echo is revealed to be a phony and makes a full confession. As he boards the train to prison (not going free as in the earlier version), Echo releases Rosie from her promise and allows her to go with Hector. Chaney's final screen image finds him in handcuffs, looking back from the departing train.

THE UNHOLY THREE (1925), a financial and critical success, reaffirmed Chaney's status as a major star and heralded a sort of comeback for Tod Browning. Mordant Hall in the *New York Times* (Aug. 4) called it "a startling original achievement which takes its place with the very best productions that have been made," and thought it "encouraging to witness something so different from the usual run of films".

In the opening scenes, the viewer is introduced to sideshow freaks. Chaney's ventriloquist role is highly unusual for a silent film, yet the illusion is well presented via pantomime (after an introductory card). Later, the illusion is furthered by the appearance of comic-strip-style dialogue balloons above the parrots. This was a daring experiment that paid off. Five years later, ventriloquism proved to be a natural for the infant medium of talking pictures. The "Man of a Thousand Faces" was set to become a "Man of a Thousand Voices" as well. In the sound remake, five were heard: his own, the "dummy voice", Mrs. O'Grady, a parrot, and a voice in the crowd. (When James Cagney impersonated Chaney in 1957's *THE MAN OF A THOUSAND FACES*, he spoke in a harsh voice during the *UNHOLY THREE* sequence, as one suffering from throat cancer. Watching Chaney's actual performance, no vocal difficulties are evident.)

Because *THE UNHOLY THREE* of 1930 is the single film in which Chaney's vocal performance can be judged, it is one of his most important works. Drawing on his stage experience, and with the aid of professional voice coaches, he made the transition well. Rumors circulated that Chaney greatly feared the talkie medium, but his portrayal of Professor Echo shows no evidence of this. A key dramatic incident occurs when Mrs. O'Grady's voice accidentally drops to Echo's vocal level. This is the reason that the court sequence was altered for the 1930 version.

It's interesting to note the career directions of some of the other players in *THE UNHOLY THREE*. Mae Busch went from leading lady to featured roles (often as the shrewish wife of Oliver Hardy), then to smaller parts and extra work. Victor McLaglin went on to score a hit and earn an Oscar in 1935's *THE INFORMER*. For the rest of his career he was a staple in Westerns, many directed by John Ford. Harry Earles, needless to say, remained typecast. In 1932 came his best-remembered role, that of Hans in *FREAKS*. Tod Browning's fascination with the old-woman disguise cropped up again in *DEVIL DOLL* (1936), in which Lionel Barrymore's disguise is very similar to the Mrs. O'Grady setup.

After completing *THE UNHOLY THREE* (1930), Chaney went to New York to consult doctors about his cancer. He then retired to his cabin in the High Sierras. On August 20, he was admitted to St. Vincent's hospital in Los Angeles. Six days later, he died. Chaney's final resting place is in Forest Lawn Glendale cemetery. Reportedly at his own request, his crypt is unmarked.

Note: The comic possibilities of *THE UNHOLY THREE* concept did pop up a couple of years later, in an *OUR GANG* comedy short entitled *FREE EATS* (1932). Along with the kids, the cast included Billy Gilbert as the head of a bizarre band of thieves, Paul Fix in a Mrs. O'Grady type of role, and two midgets dressed as babies.

—Jim Knüsch



The Man of a Thousand Faces is bitten by one not belonging to him. Lon Chaney and wooden friend in *THE UNHOLY THREE* (1925).



Wrinkled and puffy, the Caped Crusaders (Lewis Wilson and Douglas Croft) infiltrate the carnival-ride hideout of the insidious Dr. Daka.

A mere four years after his debut in *Detective Comics* #27, the Caped Crusader appeared on the silver screen for the first time. In this, his serial incarnation, Batman took on the forces of the Rising Sun in the form of the evil genius Dr. Daka (J. Carroll Naish). The serial is now outrageously campy and shockingly bigoted. In the opening moments of the film, for instance, we see rows of stores belonging to Japanese families, now closed because the owners have been sent to internment camps. The opening narration lets us know that the filmmakers think this a good thing! Holy Racist!

One of the few buildings still open is the Japanese Cave of Horrors, a fun-house

ride that takes thrill-seekers past wax figures of Japanese soldiers committing war atrocities. Maybe it's my perverse sense of humor, but the set looks remarkably like the Bat Cave. One almost expects to turn a corner and surprise Batman. (The Bat Cave, by the way, is just a wall with a clunky desk and chair; above this, a few bats on strings bounce around.)

Dr. Daka uses the fun house as a front for his base of operations. Taking the ride to a certain point, his henchmen get off in front of a cave (who is a live sentry). When they put their hands on a metal plate, the henchmen's handprints are scanned, allowing them admittance to Daka's hidden lair.

S With the emergence of sci-fi in the early 50s, film horrors mirrored the real-life horrors of the atomic age. By mid-decade, radiation had spawned giant ants, spiders, and scorpions. With the death knell sounding on the horror film in the early 70s, horror and science fiction blended yet again, this time with pollution and toxic mutations as the catalyst. Not many animals were spared as giant alligators, grizzly bears, piranhas, frogs, worms, and even rabbits were loosed on horror audiences. Snakes were no exception and, unfortunately, in 1973 an underrated film was lost in the rush of blood and fur. Bernard Kowalski's SSSSSSS was a nostalgic trip back to those mad-

scientist thrillers of the 40s, but with modern effects and indelible pathos.

Strother Martin, in a maniacally witty performance, plays a scientist who loves cold-blooded reptiles and believes they will inherit the Earth. In hyper fashion, he tries to breed a race of snake men in preparation for the future. Heather Menzies, in one of her best roles, plays Martin's daughter, who slowly realizes that her father has a few screws loose and tragically loses the man she loves to the effects of the experiment. Dirk Benedict plays the unfortunate hero who, in a chilling scene, visits a circus sideshow and is confronted with a snake man who turns out to have been Martin's previous assistant. The snake make-up by John Chambers (of *PLANET OF THE APES* fame) is marvelous and adds to the eeriness of the pro-



Bruce Wayne (Lewis Wilson) is a wealthy playboy whose girlfriend is the lovely Linda Page (Shirley Patterson). Linda must be interested in Bruce for his money: the guy is a stuck-up snob who insists on bringing his youthful ward, Dick Grayson (Douglas Croft), along on his dates. Bruce and Dick (who are, of course, Batman and Robin) become involved in tracking down Daka when the villain kidnaps Linda's Uncle Gus (Martin Warren).

Radium laser guns, electronically brainwashed zombies, cliff-hangers (the funniest comes in the first episode, with the Caped Crusader flailing madly as he "falls" off a building)—this was *BATMAN*. Naish, an Irishman who played everything but an Irishman in his long career, sneers marvelously through 15 chapters before finally meeting his doom in one of his own death traps (a fate met by Professor Moriarty that same year in Universal's *SHERLOCK HOLMES AND THE SECRET WEAPON*).

BATMAN is goofy fun, but the Columbia serials, by and large, were vastly inferior to the Republic chapter plays.

Note: Now available on Goodtimes Video, the film's narration has been redone by Gary Owens of *LAUGH-IN* fame. Some (though not all) of the racist remarks have been toned down. Could it be because Sony currently owns Columbia? What will they do to *BRIDGE ON THE RIVER KWAI* (1957)?

—Kevin G. Shinnick

duction. Director Kowalski does a terrific job establishing his characters right at the start, thereby making the ensuing tragedy even more chilling. SSSSSSS is one little film that deserves re-appraisal.

—Bill Amazzini



Dirk Benedict sheds for Strother Martin.

FREAKS

In the darkened Rialto movie house in New York City, in the summer of 1932, an unsuspecting audience sat in rapt anticipation of director Tod Browning's latest horror offering. Browning had had great success adapting the classic *DRACULA* (1931) to the screen, and now the public wondered what would be next. As the picture rolled, some in the theater began to scream, others ran out, while most just stared in horrified disbelief. They had gotten much more than they ever imagined from Tod Browning. They had gotten... **FREAKS**.

After directing the unique Lon Chaney in nine films, including *LONDON AFTER MIDNIGHT* (1927) and the silent version of *THE UNHOLY THREE* (1925), and after the aforementioned *DRACULA*, Browning went searching for stronger stuff, something to top himself, and found it in a short story by British fantasy author Clarence "Tod" Robbins, entitled "Spurs". It was the simple yet powerful tale of a beautiful, self-centered trapeze artist named Cleopatra and her lover Hercules, the circus strongman. When Hans, one of the sideshow's midgets, inherits a fortune, the two conspire to take it from him through Cleopatra's encouragement of the small man's infatuation with her. Marrying, the heartless beauty begins to slowly poison her new husband. Cleopatra and Hercules are unaware, though, of the strong tie that binds the "family" of carnival freaks, who exact from the pair a terrible revenge.

It's interesting to note that Tod Browning was a former circus worker. He understood P. T. Barnum's belief that audiences are repelled by but strangely attracted to the macabre. Browning attempted to translate this basic human interest to the screen.

FREAKS starred Olga Baclanova and Henry Victor as the scheming lovers and midget actor Harry Earles as their pitiful victim. Browning's major coup was to have real-life circus freaks play themselves in the film. Midgets, living skeletons, Siamese twins, pinheads, and a man without arms and legs filled the cast. Browning tried not to exploit his actors' deformities and presented them in as warm and dignified a way as possible, making the true "freaks" of the story the two normal people. Ironically, by making the freaks' revenge at the climax so extreme, Browning's sympathetic plan backfired. The sight of the freaks closing in upon the unsuspecting Cleopatra during the

height of a raging storm was used to the *nth* degree, taking full advantage of their unfortunate ugliness and, if anything, making them even more repulsive.

Browning took the quiet ending of the Robbins story and transformed it into a stomach-turning masterpiece of the grotesque. In the original, the wronged midget stabs his wife's lover to death, leaving her to face a perverse and lonely life. In the film's horrifying conclusion, the strong man is castrated and killed, and Cleopatra is mutilated. Her legs removed and face scarred, she becomes the sideshow's "Human Chicken". To quell this jolting scene, a hasty ending was added in which Hans marries an equally small woman to live, supposedly, happily ever after.

The film was made by MGM, who, after its initial disastrous release, wanted desperately to disown it.

The title was changed three times: to *FORBIDDEN LOVE*, *THE MONSTER SHOW*, and the even worse *NATURE'S MISTAKES*. Some prints still carry an apology from the studio to the viewer.

FREAKS was banned completely in England. Finally, MGM was forced to claim that the picture was "lost" somewhere in its vaults, hopefully never to be seen again.

Never, though, is a very long time, and *FREAKS* escaped its premature burial and resurfaced in the early 60s to become, at first, an underground midnight movie, then a cult film shown at colleges throughout the country. Britain removed it from its banned list in 1963. Compared with today's gore-filled flicks, *FREAKS* is still powerfully disturbing and not easily forgotten.

Sadly, Tod Browning's reputation was destroyed. He managed to make a few more pictures after 1932, most notably *MARK OF THE VAMPIRE* (1935), a remake of his earlier *LONDON AFTER MIDNIGHT*, and the well-crafted *THE DEVIL DOLL* (1936). Then Hollywood turned its back on the director, just as they had on his monstrous offspring. In 1942, Browning retired to his mansion in Santa Monica, where he died on October 6, 1962, at the age of 80. He never lived to see the film that cost him his career become known as a "classic" of the cinema.

FREAKS is now readily available at your local video store, released on tape by MGM itself. After 60 years, Browning's bastard child has returned home, welcomed with opened arms.

—Scot D. Ryerson



THE ABALONE DAILY STAR

Photo © 1964, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Inc.

PRICE 5¢

7 FACES OF DR. LAO

Written by 29-year-old newsman Charles G. Finney, and winner of the American Booksellers Association prize for most original novel of 1934, *The Circus of Dr. Lao* is an irreverent, lewd, virtually plotless exercise in phantasmagoria. Practically every page of Finney's unique spectacle introduces a strange new creature to the unimaginative citizens of Abalone, Arizona: a gorgon, a werewolf, a satyr, a faun, a hermaphroditic sphinx, and something that is either a bear or a Russian or both. Small wonder the *Saturday Review* called *The Circus of Dr. Lao* "an extraordinary brainstorm...a remarkable excursion into the fantastic".

In 1964, fresh from the artistic triumph of 1960's *THE TIME MACHINE* and the relative defeat of 1961's *ATLANTIS, THE LOST CONTINENT*, producer/director George Pal brought Finney's prize-winning work to the screen as *7 FACES OF DR. LAO*. Tony Randall starred as Dr. Lao and his Faces, a role (or rather, roles) originally slated for Peter Sellers. Drastically softening the author's caustic view of humanity, Pal's additions to the story included a romance for Barbara Eden (as a prim librarian) and John Ericson (as an idealistic newspaper editor), and Kevin Tate as a fatherless boy whose eyes are opened to the wonders and possibilities of the world by the Chinese doctor's unorthodox show. What emerges on film is a strongly sentimentalized but nonetheless entertaining amalgam of Finney's book and *THE MUSIC MAN* (1962).

Though much of the narrative is altered (Minerva Urecal as Kate is restored to human form after being turned to stone by Medusa; Finney's Kate remains a block of marble), toned down (Barbara Eden's tryst with the slyly sensuous Pan doesn't go nearly as far as it does in Finney's book), or dropped completely (the peep show, wherein the guileless young faun is sexually abused by a gaggle of Rabelaisian nymphs, was

deemed unsuitable viewing for the film's Saturday-matinee audiences), one scene survives its trip from the printed page to the silver screen almost intact. Mrs. Howard Cassan, a plump and powdered matron played to flighty perfection by Lee Patrick (TV's Mrs. Topper), steps merrily into the fortune-teller's tent of the blind-but-all-seeing Appolonius of Tyana (Randall). As faithfully scripted by Charles Beaumont, the subsequent scene contains not a trace of sentiment. It is quiet, precise, and ineffably sad:

Mrs. Howard Cassan: You look like Howard, my poor, dear, departed husband.

Appolonius of Tyana: You know he did not die. He simply walked out of your life years ago.

MHC: Yes, well, you know everything, don't you? How soon will I strike oil on that 20 acres of mine?

AOT: Never.

MHC: Well, what sort of man will come into my life?

AOT: There will be no more men in your life.

MHC: Well, really! Really! What's the use of my living if I'm not going to be rich, not going to be married again, no more men...

AOT: I only read futures. I don't evaluate them.

MHC: That's utter nonsense!

AOT: The future is always nonsense, until it becomes the past.

MHC: Oh, go on; do your job! I paid you! Read my future!

AOT: Tomorrow will be like today, and the day after tomorrow will be like the day before yesterday. I see your remaining days as a tedious collection of hours full of useless vanities. You will think no new thoughts and you will forget what little you have known. Older you will become, but not wiser. Stiffer, but not more dignified. Childless you are, and childless you will remain. Of that suppleness you once commanded in your youth, of that strange simplicity which once attracted men to you, neither endures, nor shall you recapture them.

MHC: You're a mean, ugly man.

AOT: Mirrors are often ugly and mean. When you die, you will be buried and forgotten, and for all the good or evil, creation or destruction your living might have accomplished, you might just as well never have lived at all.



Prominent Abalonian Mrs. Howard Cassan (Lee Patrick) has the future spelled out for her by Appolonius of Tyana (Tony Randall), antiquated member of the Circus of Dr. Lao.

AOT: Never.

MHC: But I paid a fortune for that land.

AOT: You wasted your money. Next question.

MHC: All right, you naughty man. When shall I be married again?

Time magazine called *The Circus of Dr. Lao* "half dream, half nightmare...an authentic American classic." See the film version for its charm, performances, and Oscar-nominated special effects. Then get yourself a copy of the book.

—Richard Valley

Nightmare Alley

In Hollywood, during the heyday of the "studio system", leading men had a certain image that had to be maintained. Tyrone Power's image was the dashing leading man/swashbuckler. However, in more than two decades of performing for the camera, Power's favorite role was that of a diabolical, self-destructive, shiftily carnival con man who winds up a geek in the postwar NIGHTMARE ALLEY (1947).

agrees to continue as Carlisle's partner. Soon Carlisle is famous among Lilith's rich clients. One in particular, businessman Ezra Grindle (Taylor Holmes), becomes so enamored of Carlisle's "talent" that he gives him \$150,000 to build a tabernacle. More is promised if he can make a strong contact with the spirit of Grindle's long-dead lover. Carlisle dresses Molly as Grindle's lost love and makes her



Tyrone Power starts out chasing chicks and ends up eating chickens in 1947's NIGHTMARE ALLEY. Pictured with Power: Colleen Gray.

The film concerns Stan Carlisle (Power), a canny worker in a sleazy side show. A mentalist named Zeena (Joan Blondell) and her alcoholic husband Pete (Ian Keith) perform a mind-reading act. Carlisle makes love to Zeena and, one night, gives Pete a drink from a bottle containing wood alcohol. Pete dies. Carlisle is taught the act's mental "code", replacing Pete, and gets involved with Molly (Coleen Gray), an innocent side-show worker. Her protector, the strongman Bruno (Mike Mazurki), assumes they've been making love and forces them to marry.

Carlisle and Molly leave the carnival and perform their own act with the code stolen from Zeena. As "The Great Stanton", Carlisle is a success on the nightclub circuit. One night he encounters a shady psychologist, Lilith Ritter (Helen Walker), who proposes a scheme: Part of her therapy involves recording conversations with her clients. Lilith suggests that Carlisle use this confidential information at private readings. Molly isn't pleased, but she

walk the millionaire's grounds, but she breaks down and exposes the whole affair.

Carlisle makes his way to Lilith to collect his share of the \$150,000 they've swindled, but she gives him only \$150 and threatens to turn him in for killing Pete. Carlisle separates from Molly, promising to meet up with her again. On the road he drinks heavily and finally lands a job in a carnival, as the geek. (In the opening scenes Carlisle says he can't understand how someone could sink so low; now someone says the same of him). One night he runs wildly around the grounds, desperate for a drink. Molly, who happens to be part of the carnival, calms him, and begins to nurse him back to normalcy.

After war service Tyrone Power appeared in THE RAZOR'S EDGE (1946). Unfortunately, as Power himself believed, he was upstaged by Anne Baxter and Clifton Webb. NIGHTMARE ALLEY was cast while Power's THE CAPTAIN FROM CASTILE (1947) was in produc-

tion. Veteran performer George Jessel was assigned as producer, and Power insisted on being cast in the lead. Both Jessel and studio head Darryl F. Zanuck were shocked by Power's desire to play Stan Carlisle, but the dashing actor had seen in the role a chance to really display his acting talents. It proved to be a good choice.

An actual carnival, the Patterson-Yankee, was leased for the time needed to film NIGHTMARE ALLEY and set up on the 20th Century Fox backlot. On the show-business ladder, the carnival was considered the lowest rung, and the geek the lowest form of carnival life. Although never actually shown in the film, the geek's act was to bite the head off a live chicken. His reward: an ample supply of liquor and a place to "sleep it off". Understandably, the studio was concerned about the critics' and public's reaction to one of their top male properties playing such a character. Zanuck rushed NIGHTMARE ALLEY into theaters so the earlier CAPTAIN FROM CASTILE could follow soon after. Thus, Power's fans would be reassured and his image restored. *The New York Times* review of October 10, 1947, stated, "Mr. Power has a juicy role and sinks his teeth into it, performing with considerable versatility and persuasiveness".

NIGHTMARE ALLEY has been referred to as a "B" production given an "A" treatment (and, as some have felt, ruined by it). Edmund Goulding was personally asked to direct it by Tyrone Power. To get past the censors, much of author William Lindsey Gresham's novel was glossed over, weeding out and altering some of the more sensational aspects, and an upbeat ending was decided upon. (In the novel, Molly does not return to Carlisle.) In the film's initial release it lost money. More recently, however, it has achieved a cult following.

Note: When Tyrone Power was sent off by Fox studio on a promotional tour for NIGHTMARE ALLEY, the DC-3 plane that he traveled in was renamed *The Geek*.

—Jim Knüsch

HOWLING VI: THE FREAKS

Let's get the big problem out of the way: Yes, Joe Dante's original THE HOWLING (1980) is still far and away the best of the series, the shortest, and the only howler to have a major theatrical release. The subsequent direct-to-video entries can be rated hideously bad (1984's HOWLING II: YOUR SISTER IS A WEREWOLF), strange (1987's HOWLING III: THE MARSHALLS), or disappointing (1988's HOWLING IV: THE ORIGINAL NIGHTMARE).

Strangely enough, all these films made enough money in video sales to continue the series. Stranger still, 1989's *HOWLING V: THE REBIRTH* was actually a well-made thriller in the *TEN LITTLE INDIANS* vein. More precisely, it's a reworking of the Peter Cushing werewolf film *THE BEAST MUST DIE* (1974). Now comes *HOWLING VI: THE FREAKS* (1991), the best of the sequels. This is the first one shot in the States since the original (the others were shot in Europe, Australia, and South Africa), and it's also the longest film in the series.

Ian (Brendon Hughes, so marvelous in 1989's *TO DIE FOR*) wanders into the small Midwestern town of Canton Bluff, a place already dying both morally and financially. The sheriff (Carlos Cervantes) tries to run him off as a vagrant, but Ian is given room and board by town preacher Dewey (Jared Barclay) in exchange for fixing up the old church. The preacher's daughter, Elizabeth (Michele Matheson), is attracted to the stranger.

Into the town comes a small traveling circus, whose main attraction seems to be its House of Freaks. A newcomer to their "family", Winston (Sean Gregory Sullivan), is at first unwilling to join, as he is tired of people staring and laughing at his deformity (half his body is covered with alligator-like skin). However, he's soon persuaded. The show is run by Mr. Harker (a great performance by Bruce Martin Payne), who apparently majored in "sinister showman" à la Mr. Dark of *SOMETHING WICKED THIS WAY COMES* (1982).

Discovering that Ian is a werewolf (in a poor make-up that makes him look like a hairy man in lipstick and eye shadow), Harker endeavors to add him to the carnival attractions. Harker seems able to evoke Ian's transformation by muttering an arcane incantation. The showman has other secrets hidden at the circus: for example, a vampire.

By story's end, Winston has been bitten by both werewolf and vampire. Since he survives, one suspects that he will be a hybrid terror in the promised part VII. *HOWLING VI* has its faults, but, on the whole, a talented cast elevates it above most sequels. Special mention must be made of Antonio Vargas and Carol Lynley. Vargas seems to be carving out a career as a sleazy horror-film character, first as a derelict who loses his head to *THE BORROWER* (1991), and here as a circus geek. Lynley remains as alluring as she was in *HARLOW* (1967). Neither performer—indeed, no one connected with this film—seems to be treating it as an exercise in "slumming".

—Kevin G. Shinnick

WHO DONE IT?

In an issue devoted to movies with a circus theme, one might look at this title and ask, "Who Picked It?" But this Abbott and Costello comedy is not just a gem among their vast output; it has as a centerpiece one of the most side-splitting carnival acts ever put on film. By the time the team finished production on *WHO DONE IT?* they'd been declared the nation's number-one box-office attraction, and their energy and enthusiasm here show us why. The boys romp through this comedy/mystery at breakneck speed, giving us laughs every step of the way with, surprisingly, no musical interludes to slow down the proceedings.

The plot is simple enough, with Bud and Lou playing a pair of drugstore soda jerks hoping to get a job as scriptwriters for a local mystery program called "Murder at Midnight". When a real murder occurs, they pose as detectives, reasoning that if they solve the crime they will impress the station enough to be hired. A dubious assumption, you might say, but it's enough to provide a springboard for some great gags in the darkened corridors of a skyscraper within which a killer lurks. While posing as the police, our heroes are chased by the real cops, escape into a theatre, and wind up smack in the middle of an acrobatic act, costumes and all. This wonderful sequence is the high point of the film, and there's a laugh before the act even begins, for those who listen carefully. In a film made in the days when the infamous Breen Office kept a censorious

stranglehold on screenwriters, it is incredible to hear the act introduced as "The Flying Bordellos"! The astute Breen watchdogs were obviously asleep at the switch when this one slipped by. The act, as ruined by Costello, is as funny as its name. The sight of Lou pushing the acrobats aside to take his bow is hilarious, as are his attempts at forward rolls across the stage. The biggest laugh comes after a long build-up to a jump off a springboard onto a seesaw. The object is to flip three tumblers from the opposite end of the seesaw, and after Lou makes it very clear to the audience (in pantomime) how difficult the feat is going to be, his jump takes him through the floor in a cloud of dust.

Director Erle C. Kenton was generally known for his efficient but routine work. He also helmed two other Abbott and Costello films, *PARDON MY SARCASM* (1942) and *IT AIN'T HAY* (1943), but *WHO DONE IT?* is his best work with the team. Bud and Lou were helped by a better-than-average supporting cast, including Patric Knowles, Mary Wickes, and a young William Bendix, who, as one of the detectives in pursuit, works particularly well with Costello.

As a whole, *WHO DONE IT?* is consistent entertainment, with Abbott and Costello at their best. It's nice to see them involved in a mystery, and Charles Van Enger's shadowy cinematography adds greatly to the atmosphere.

—Richard Scrivani



Dumb cops William Gargan and William Bendix put the heat on dumb detectives Bud Abbott and Lou Costello in 1942's WHO DONE IT?

BERSERK!

BERSERK! (1967) is a non-stop kitsch-fest filled with unforgettable moments. Billed as "The Shocker Calculated To Drive You BERSERK!", it succeeds in doing just that for a variety of reasons—none of which the producer originally intended. Most notably, the inadvertent hilarity results from the seemingly endless parade of cheap but hysterical circus acts and an outrageous performance by Joan Crawford. It's one of those films that is so bad that it's a joy to experience.

The silly narrative concerns Monica Rivers, the tough-as-nails owner and ringmaster of a traveling circus. A killer is stalking the performers. One by one, they are snuffed out in a variety of ways: a high-wire artiste is hung before an audience, someone is literally sawed in half during a magic act, and another does a free-fall flop onto a bed of spikes. Ouch! Later, it's discovered that the murderer is Rivers' daughter; the poor girl only wanted her mother's attention. (We won't even comment on the glaring plot flaws, except to note the fact that several murders have already been committed by the time Rivers' daughter shows up!)

Although the troupe is known as The Great Rivers Circus, the head shields worn by the elephants read (appropriately) "BS"—for the actual Billy Smart Circus used. (Speaking of plugging, one scene includes a prominently displayed Pepsi sign for all of Joan's soft-drink fans.)

Throughout BERSERK!, a series of hilarious acts are displayed. These include Jody, the Wonder Elephant (who cautiously steps over and between a bevy of supine, Las Vegas type show-girls), and Phylis Allen and Her Intelligent Poodles (a spunky batch of flying fur whizzing through a series of tried-and-true canine acrobatics). It would be remiss not to mention the delightfully excruciating tune sung (or rather lip-synched) by a quartet consisting of a dwarf, a skeleton man, a strong man, and a bearded lady. As they enthusiastically sing "It Might Be Me", a chuckling Joan looks on.

The New York Times began their review: "Joan Crawford is back and the circus has her, or rather she has the circus. . . ." The aging glamour-puss struts through the big top in gravity-defying tights (designed by Edith Head!), smart suits, and negligees—often revealing a set of alarmingly well-preserved, fish-netted gams. Also, Joan must have had a stipulation in her contract regarding proper lighting. Invariably, her face is shot in brilliant light and framed by diagonal bars of shadow. Instead of softening her features, though, what results is a bizarre, Kabuki-like mask.

As Monica Rivers, ever the determined trouper, Joan keeps the show on the road at any cost. Her dialogue is peppered with some real screamers. At the start of a cat-fight with nemesis Diana Dors, Joan lashes out, "You slut! You miserable ingrate!" Later, describing her difficult life in the circus world, she explains, "There's nothing certain in show business. We've eaten caviar, we've eaten sawdust." Some of the best lines are reserved for her seduction scenes with muscular (and often shirtless) Ty Hardin. In one scene, the star (who, in 1967, was in her early 60s) tries to strike a deal with the gold-digging Hardin by offering "25 percent of the circus and 100 percent of me".

Toward the middle of the film, Monica's daughter Angela (Judy Geeson) unexpectedly arrives on the scene. She's been expelled from her ritzy English boarding school. By the finale, we discover that Angela is not as angelic as she appears. (Poor Joan, she never seems to have much luck raising children. At least she made a decent mother to Trog.) In the last few harrowing moments, Angela gets her comeuppance in the form of a rather poorly aimed lightning bolt. If there is a moral to be found in BERSERK!, it could be a warning never to try to fool Mother Nature. . . or Mommie Dearest!

—Michael O. Yaccarino





Torture Garden



Step up! Step up! There's nothing like a good fright to tone up the circulation! You'll shriek! You'll shudder! You'll shiver! But no harm done. It's the thrill of a lifetime! But not for the faint of heart.

Welcome to the tent of Dr. Diabolo—dare you see his hundred horrors? Enter his Torture Garden—where nothing grows but fear!

Put yourself in the cold, merciless hands of Atropos, Goddess of Destiny. She holds the Shears of Fate, the very threads of doom. Each colored string represents a human life, and the Shears have the power to cut it short. Atropos will reveal the ultimate horror hidden deep inside you. Are you afraid? Now... look at the figure... look at the figure... look into the Shears... deeply... deeply... into the Shears of Fate as they tell their horrifying tales of the uncanny... *snip!*

Hungry for money? Greedy? Well, let's spin the tale of one Colin Williams, whose desire for gold leads him into a murder for buried treasure. He gets more

than he bargains for: namely, an infernal feline. This kitty craves a little blood money in the form of human flesh. But as Colin soon discovers, it's nothing to lose your head over. Or is it? Well, as they say, you don't own a cat, a cat owns you.

Welcome to Hollywood, Land of Tinsel! Home to cookie-cutter starlets and wooden actors. In our next yarn, selfish, gold-digging Carla Hayes wants to see her name in lights. This box-office beauty soon finds out that all that glitters isn't gold in this world of illusion. Poor Carla, she's been giving such mechanical performances lately. But everyone agrees... she's a living doll!

Have an ear for music? Then listen to the sinister strains of our next number. Dorothy Endicott is in love with an off-key pianist... but his piano's in love with him, too! And what a possessive keyboard she is! Pitiful Dorothy's given a private recital of Chopin's Funeral March by the animated instrument, which builds to a big *crash*-endo!

Are you a connoisseur of the creepy? Then you'll love our last tale—one that might have come from the pen of Edgar Allan Poe. That great writer is the consuming obsession of Ronald Wyatt. In fact, he's discovered a way to actually collect old Ed himself. Talk about a first edition! Still, even the best of plans go awry. When will we hear of Mr. Wyatt again, you ask? Quoth the raven...

This astonishing journey into the unknown stars Peter Cushing, Jack Palance, Beverly Adams, and Burgess Meredith as the fiendish Dr. Diabolo. The frightful tour was written by shock-author Robert Bloch and directed by Freddie Francis.

Step right up; who's next? Now it's your turn to enter the Torture Garden—and don't forget your Fright Seeds! Plant at your own risk!

Note: Columbia Pictures promised patrons free packages of "Fright Seeds". When planted, they sprouted into long spikes of hay-like grass.

—Scot D. Ryerson



In the slam-bang pre-title sequence of MOONRAKER (1979), the 11th installment of the James Bond series, the gargantuan comic-relief henchman, Jaws (Richard Kiel), pulls the ripcord clean off his parachute. Instead of splattering to the ground, though, the metal-mouthed assassin lands safely in the folds of a circus tent, which promptly collapses. But the big top figured more prominently in Agent 007's OCTOPUSSY (1983).

The beautiful title character (Maude Adams) is not only a diamond smuggler and the high priestess of an exotic octopus cult, but also the owner of a circus that is about to be blown sky-high by a concealed atomic bomb. Disguised in a clown costume, Commander Bond (Roger Moore) frantically disarms the device, which was planted by a disgruntled Soviet general, seconds before it is set to detonate.

Roger Moore may not be everyone's favorite Bond. Swapping Sean Connery's inimitable sardonic wit for lightweight easy-to-take charm, Moore was likeable when he wasn't overdoing the humor. When Moore became Bond, the series' cutting edge had become considerably blunted and the films increasingly cynical and "formalized": big, bloated Hollywood money-making machines geared to a pre-sold audience. OCTOPUSSY doesn't

Octopussy



Roger Moore at his most suave.

break any new ground, but it is one of the best-sustained of Moore's Bond adventures. The star is somewhat less unflappable than usual, and it's a change for the better. Those tight spots in which he's up against gun-toting goons or karate-kicking assassins aren't quite as easy to get out of this time around; in a few scenes he actually looks *scared*.

It's these little touches that raise OCTOPUSSY above average for the series. The plot is the usual hodge-podge, with some obvious lifts from earlier Bond films (the ticking bomb is a direct steal from 1964's GOLDFINGER). But the action scenes are terrific, including a jungle chase inspired by THE MOST DANGEROUS GAME (1932) and a funny bit with Bond sparring with machete-wielding thugs in a yoga salon (most of the action unfolds in Delhi).

Louis Jourdan is as much a velour villain as Moore is a velour hero. No Gert Frobe, he distances himself from the material by merely walking through (or possibly above) it, laying on the Continental charm and mannerisms that made him such a heartthrob a few decades back. Like just about everything else in OCTOPUSSY, he's affably and appropriately tongue-in-cheek.

—Michael Brunas

The Green Town Gazette

Photo © 1983 Walt Disney Productions

Price 5¢

SOMETHING WICKED THIS WAY COMES

"By the pricking of my thumbs, something wicked this way comes."

That line was originally spoken by one of Shakespeare's witches prior to the arrival of Macbeth, but it also perfectly foreshadows the arrival of Mr. Dark in the 1983 Walt Disney adaptation of Ray Bradbury's classic 1962 fantasy novel, *Something Wicked This Way Comes*.

A driverless train speeds on through the night, its headlamp searing white in the surrounding blackness. As it passes, ear-piercing shrieks engulf the countryside. The gravestones and sculpted angels of a rural cemetery begin to shatter, sending forth shafts of blinding, flame-colored radiance. In the twilight days of autumn, just before the golden leaves are lost to the frigid winds of winter, the big show comes to town: Dark's Pandemonium Carnival.

Behind the brilliant banners of scarlet, purple, and blue, hidden beneath the discordant tunes of a caliope and the enticing smells of popcorn and cotton candy, sinister attractions await the local thrill-seekers: a carousel that spins both backward and forward, bestowing youth or maturity on those who climb aboard; a mysterious beauty encased in ice; a Ferris wheel from which riders suddenly vanish; and most appalling of all, a hall of mirrors in whose gleaming surfaces are reflected lost opportunities and human regret.

This creepy little film stars Jason Robards, Diane Ladd, and Pam Grier, but

benefits most from the powerfully believable performance of Jonathan Pryce as the ominous Mr. Dark. Tall, gaunt, cloaked in black from top hat to boots, and with a soft, seductive voice, Pryce personifies the deadly force controlling the fair. The film

ing, a battle of wits takes place between the powers of good (Robards) and evil (Pryce). Here we discover the real secret of Dark's carnival—you'll have your deepest desires fulfilled as long as you are willing to pay the price. (Two examples: the community's grade-school teacher receives the gift of beauty, only to go blind; the barber, forever entranced by women, becomes the sideshow's bearded lady.)

Pryce is at his most satanically tempting as he offers Robards the chance to relive his youth with health and strength. While taunting him into surrender, Dark symbolically rips each year of Robards' life out of a book, the pages igniting into ashes as they float to the floor. Also unnerving is the otherworldly sight of Grier drifting through the stacks of books, silver-faced and dressed in flowing robes resembling cobwebs.

A Disney film, though, is a Disney film—a little too safe, clean, and artificial, with the inevitable happy ending—so don't expect a real chiller, just a beautifully

told fantasy of shadows.

Admirers of film music take note: the atmospheric score by American James Horner was, unfortunately, never released as a soundtrack. However, an earlier unused score by the French Georges Delerue is available on Varese Saraband cassettes and CDs. This offers the unique opportunity to hear the film through the ears of two distinctly different composers.

—Scot D. Ryerson



Dark's Pandemonium Carnival, presided over by Mr. Dark himself (Jonathan Pryce), arrives in Green Town.

was directed by Jack Clayton, who also helmed the superlative *THE INNOCENTS* (1961), a film based on Henry James' *The Turn of the Screw*. Ray Bradbury himself wrote the screenplay.

The film owes a great deal to the innocent scares of Disneyland's Haunted Mansion, where more is felt and anticipated than actually seen. There is, however, one truly frighteningly effective scene. In the town's library, a place of safety and learn-

special-effects masters Raymond and Stephen Chiodo mixed childlike fears with hysterically brutal sight gags in a film that should have emerged as the "sleeper" of that year: *KILLER KLOWNS FROM OUTER SPACE*.

Viewers may be repelled by the title of this opus, but it only reinforces the schlock ingredients of the film. *KILLER KLOWNS* not only balances humor and horror, it emerges as a tribute to 50s sci-fi classics by incorporating veteran character actors Royal Dano and John Vernon in its nightmare tale. The plot is exactly what the title suggests. A spaceship resembling

a spinning top bores into the ground until it looks like nothing so much as a spectacularly lit circus tent. Towards the middle of the film, the *KILLER KLOWNS* camouflage their space ship within the confines of an amusement park, using a fun-house facade as an entrance. A custard pie in the face causes the victim to melt because of its acid-based ingredients. Cotton-candy ray guns spray cocoon-like fibers that encase their victims and devour them from within. (This allows the Klowns to get a sip of blood now and then.) Popcorn placed in the dark grows and evolves into fang-toothed

Continued on next page

Horror from the Heavens

KILLER KLOWNS FROM OUTER SPACE

When children first see the face of a circus clown, they may react in one of two ways: smiling at the hilarious painted-on smile or cringing in terror at what, possibly, lies behind the smile. Horror/fantasy writer Robert Bloch once was approached and asked what he considered the most frightening image conceivable; Bloch replied, "A clown at midnight". In 1988,

KILLER KLOWNS

Continued from previous page

monsters. In a beautifully twisted scene, a playful Clown, holding a huge mallet topped off by a foot-long spike, invites a young girl to come out and play.

Horror and sci-fi fans will find homages to *THE THING* (1951), *INVADERS FROM MARS* (1953), *INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS* (1956), *ATTACK OF THE 50-FOOT WOMAN* (1958), and even Toho Studio's Japanese extravaganzas. The clown makeups are incredible, the sets are poised between the brilliant and the grotesque, and the music blends hard rock with circus calliope refrains to enhance the shenanigans. Director Stephen Cando balances humor and horror like a veteran aerialist. Whether you embrace or reject this cult oddity, *KILLER KLOWNS FROM OUTER SPACE* gives the center ring to the "Killer Clown" that exists, to some degree, within our darkest fantasies.

—Bill Amazzini

Sideshow Scandal

SHE FREAK

A lurid, fifth-rate carnival melodrama, *SHE FREAK* (1966) owes its infinitesimal historical significance to the fact that it is an unofficial semi-remake of Tod Browning's classic *FREAKS* (1943). Exactly the sort of seamy, sordid nonsense one comes to expect from 60s schlockmeister David. F. Friedman, *SHE FREAK* unabashedly pirates the earlier film's flashback set-up and most of its plot particulars.

A nasty young Texas waitress (Claire Brennen) links up with a carnival and sets romantic sights on the handsome, wealthy owner of the freak attraction (Bill McKinney). She marries him for his money, but carries on an affair with the surly young Ferris-wheel jockey (Lee Raymond) on the sly. Murder and mayhem ensue, and the freaks take revenge on the girl in a climax that will come as no surprise to those who recall Olga Baclanova's fate in *FREAKS*.

The film is strictly amateur-night stuff, complete with awkward acting, clumsy exposition, shabby sets, and drowned-out dialogue. Except for Felix Silla, once again typecast as a midget, actual freaks are in short supply, with a handful of lumbering plug-uglies picking up the slack. Most of the film is shot outdoors, where endless scenes of carnival activity, shot without sound and played without interest, pad the running time to a grueling 87 minutes.

—Tom Weaver



Bela Lugosi (pictured here with Noble Johnson and Charles Gemora as his gorilla friend) preferred starring in 1932's MURDERS IN THE RUE MORGUE to playing the monster in the previous year's FRANKENSTEIN. Oops!

Exclusive from our Paris correspondent

MURDERS IN THE RUE MORGUE

This 1932 adaptation of the famous Edgar Allan Poe story concerns a sideshow huckster trying to pass off an ape as the earliest evolutionary form of the human race, while secretly experimenting to mix human and bestial blood using prostitutes as guinea pigs. Poe's focus was on C. Auguste Dupin, the brilliant Gallic investigator who was one of the models on which Sir Arthur Conan Doyle based Sherlock Holmes; but Universal went the horror route to follow up on the success of *DRACULA* (1931), with Bela Lugosi occupying center stage as the diabolical Dr. Mirakle. Wearing a thick, curly black wig and bushy eyebrows, Lugosi appears only slightly less simian than stuntman Charles Gemora, the man in the monkey suit. As in *DRACULA* and *WHITE ZOMBIE* (1932), the Hungarian actor takes the villainy to heart, finding not a single vestige of humor in scenes in which he speaks to his pet ape in gibberish, or pursues the female lead through the dark, crooked Parisian streets. Those who still wonder what went wrong with Lugosi's career need look no further than his early 30s performances to see how the actor painted himself into a corner with his own excess theatricality.

Within the confines of a film as over-stylized as this, Lugosi's mugging comes off well enough; in fact, he's far more at home than the painfully out-of-place

American juvenile leads (Sidney Fox and Leon Ames). The real stars of *MURDERS IN THE RUE MORGUE* are director Robert Florey and photographer Karl Freund, who do full justice to the wonderful expressionistic, Caligari-like sets and the frequently grisly turns of the script (the battered body of the heroine's mother is stuffed upside-down in a fireplace). Less successful are the lighter moments, the comic relief of Fatty Arbuckle clone Bert Roach, and the mawkish romantic dialogue, though an innocuous pastoral scene of the heroine on a swing is turned, thanks to Freund, into a visual highlight. The picture is topped off with a brilliantly staged rooftop chase with the girl slung over the shoulder of the rampaging ape.

Despite its visual accomplishments, *MURDERS IN THE RUE MORGUE* remains an extremely dated film, which even hardened film buffs find heavy going. As entertainment, it ranks far below most of the other Universal shockers of the period, but in terms of quality, it is not far removed from the best of them.

—Michael Brunas

**Classifieds
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Strangers On A Train

"Is your name Miriam?" asks Bruno Anthony, as music from an old-fashioned carousel plays from across a waterway. His hand holds a monogrammed cigarette lighter, which brightens a small corner of the carnival island and illuminates the face of a young woman with glasses. Barely does a response leave her throat before it is encircled in a steely grip. Bruno's hands, having dropped the lighter, force Miriam slowly and silently to the ground, the last moments of her life now bizarrely reflected in the shattered lenses of her fallen eyeglasses.

With this scene alone, Alfred Hitchcock's *STRANGERS ON A TRAIN* could establish itself as the definitive film contrasting the idyllic setting of a carnival fairground with the turmoil and brutality of "real life". Yet, with its themes of shared guilt and the attraction of violence, and its spectacular climactic scene aboard a runaway merry-go-round, *STRANGERS ON A TRAIN* is more than that; it becomes one of Hitchcock's best studies of seeming innocents in a dark, disordered world.

The success of *STRANGERS* upon its release in 1951 couldn't have come at a better time for the director. His three previous films distributed by Warner Bros. (1948's *ROPE*, 1949's *UNDER CAPRICORN*, and 1950's *STAGE FRIGHT*) had been major disappointments both critically and commercially. When Hitchcock found Patricia Highsmith's 1950 debut novel, he realized the potential for developing it into a suspenseful, visually striking film, featuring the kind of disturbed, complex, and yet charming villain not seen since Joseph Cotten's "Uncle Charlie" in 1943's *SHADOW OF A DOUBT*.

Hitchcock's screen treatment, written with playwright Whitfield Cook (scenarist of *STAGE FRIGHT*), was submitted to nearly a dozen potential scriptwriters, including Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler. Chandler ended up writing two screenplay drafts, neither of which Hitchcock deemed satisfactory. (Chandler found the director's "irritating" insistence on certain visual requirements unsatisfactory as well.) Ben Hecht, who had scripted *SPELLBOUND* (1945) and *NOTORIOUS* (1946), and served as uncredited "script doctor" on many other Hitchcock films, was at the time unavailable; one of Hecht's assistants, Czeni Ormonde, was hired to collaborate on the final version. Both Chandler and Ormonde receive screen credit as the film's writers.

On the surface, the story line of *STRANGERS* fits into Hitchcock's favor-

ite theme of the innocent man unwittingly implicated in murderous intrigue. A chance meeting between tennis champion Guy Haines (Farley Granger) and natty social butterfly Bruno Anthony (Robert Walker) aboard a train from Washington results in an odd conversation and reveals two widely different personalities. Bruno is disturbingly well-informed about Guy's personal life, particularly his difficulties in obtaining a divorce from his selfish wife, wishing as he does to remarry into a prominent political family. Charmed nevertheless by Bruno's sympathetic banter, Guy lets down his guard and continues listening to his traveling companion's eccentric "theories", one of which is an idea for an exchange of murders. If Bruno kills Guy's wife, Miriam, he suggests, Guy could then eliminate Bruno's overbearing father, creating in effect a pair of perfect crimes. When a week later Miriam is found strangled at her hometown fairground, Bruno comes calling on Guy to satisfy his half of the "bargain".

Unable to provide a sufficient alibi, Guy becomes the prime suspect in his wife's murder. Bruno, in possession of Guy's monogrammed cigarette lighter, threatens to plant it at the crime scene unless Guy fulfills his part of the murderous scenario, which Bruno insists they "planned together".

In Hitchcock's estimation, everyone, no matter who they are, has something to feel guilty about. The director's strict Catholic upbringing certainly introduced the concept of Original Sin to his psyche, as well as the ever-present temptation to succumb to the evil side that exists in us all. Guy's guilt, his feeling of complicity in the murder, stems from all the murderous thoughts he's had about his wife. It took Bruno, Guy's alter ego, to step in and put those thoughts guiltlessly into action. Bruno, in effect, is Guy without all those healthy repressions that keep him from strangling the more annoying people in his life.

Even as Guy's anxiety increases with each of Bruno's ever-bolder attempts to force him to murderous action, so do his feelings of complicity and even unconscious admiration for the killer. After all, he did do Guy a pretty big favor, freeing him to marry Ann Morton (Ruth Roman), the daughter of an influential state senator. Ann's younger sister, Barbara (Patricia Hitchcock), fascinated by the violent turn of events, imagines how "wonderful" it would be "to have a man love you so much he'd kill for you". This attraction to violent behavior is illustrated memorably in a

scene at the senator's formal dinner party, which Bruno has crashed. A dotty dowager, joking with Bruno about various ways to kill her husband, allows the charmer to playfully demonstrate his most efficient murder method: strangulation. As he grasps the old woman's throat, Bruno sees young Barbara, who, with her eyeglasses, bears a resemblance to Guy's murdered wife. Bruno's gaze fixes on her in a psychotic trance, and his grip tightens on the old woman, nearly throttling her. Following this incident, Guy's dual emotions of attraction and repulsion are demonstrated when he punches Bruno to the ground, and then picks him up, straightening his tie like an attentive spouse.

Just as Hitchcock sees Bruno Anthony as the dark, uncontrolled, potentially violent side of the human personality, so he depicts the carnival as the alter ego of normal society. It is a place where repressions are freed; lunacy and violent behavior can be safely indulged with a heavy wooden mallet or a rifle in a shooting gallery. Similarly, Bruno is an individual who indulges himself in impulsive, extreme behavior, from exploding a passing child's balloon to strangling a complete stranger.

As Bruno journeys back to the carnival to plant the incriminating lighter, Guy sweats through a championship tennis match in an unusually aggressive playing style, rushing to complete the match and prevent Bruno's treachery. The suspense created by cross-cutting between these two desperate activities, particularly when Bruno nearly loses Guy's lighter down a sewer grate, is gnawing and masterful.

Once night falls and the two men make their way to the fairground for their final rendezvous, real violence erupts amid the midway games. The police, having pursued their prime suspect, witness Guy's confrontation with Bruno aboard a moving carousel. A shot from a police revolver goes wild, killing the carousel operator, who slumps over the speed lever. The carousel spins faster and faster as children scream and wooden horses threaten to break free and trample the adversaries. An elderly camy worker volunteers to crawl under the whirling platform to shut the carousel down, which he does with a throw of the switch too forceful for the mechanism to withstand. In what is certainly the single most amazing effects shot in a Hitchcock film, the carousel hurtles out of control, rocking on its foundation as it grinds to a violent halt in an explosion of debris. Guy is miraculously thrown clear, and Bruno,

crushed under the carousel's gaudy remains, manages to speak to Guy in the presence of the police. But rather than clear Guy of blame, his last words ensure that his "collaborator" retains the guilt of the crime they shared. Only after Bruno's death does his clutched hand open to reveal the cigarette lighter with which he intended to incriminate his alter ego.

Somewhat marred, but never fatally, by several underdeveloped characters and performances, *STRANGERS ON A TRAIN* nevertheless ranks as classic Hitchcock. Using the image of the carnival as a distorted reflection of normal life, it warns us that letting down our guard and freeing our dark side from repression can spin us into a chaotic world from which we may not return.

—John J. Mathews

13 GHOSTS

Ghosts have appeared, or at times semi-appeared, on the screen in every era of the cinema. Notable titles include *J'ACCUSE* (1937), *EARTHBOUND* (1940), *THE CANTERVILLE GHOST* (1944), *BLITHE SPIRIT* (1945), *THE HAUNTING* (1963), and *THE CHANGE-LING* (1979). For *13 GHOSTS*, producer/director William Castle employed a unique way of utilizing the anaglyphic method of projecting two images, one red and the other blue, to illustrate the film's supernatural happenings. This system, first developed for three-dimensional cinematography, gave audiences an option: with the aid of a special viewer, patrons could "view" or "erase" the ghostly image. (The backgrounds were printed in red; the ghosts were printed in blue.) This process, heralded as "Illusion-O", was used for the first and only time in *13 GHOSTS*. It may have been one of the more clever Castle gimmicks, but it did little to enhance the non-existent spookiness of his film.



Cyrus Zorba (Donald Woods) works in a museum. Because of debts, his family—wife Hilda (Rosemary DeCamp), son Buck (Charles Herbert), and daughter Medea (Joe Morrow)—are losing all their possessions. As a birthday wish, Buck asks for a furnished house for his family. Buck gets his wish through an inheritance. The next day, lawyer Ben Rush (Martin Milner) explains that Cyrus's uncle, Dr. Plato Zorba, traveled the world collecting ghosts, all of which are contained in the house that the Zorba family has just inherited. Nevertheless, the Zorbas move in and meet housekeeper Elaine Zacharides (Margaret Hamilton), who goes with the house. Buck refers to her as "the witch".

Once settled, the family encounters several of Dr. Zorba's select entities, visible when anyone dons a pair of glasses, specially made for ghostly viewing. (This action is the cue for the audience to use their individual ghost viewers/removers.) Among the spirits encountered: a headless circus lion tamer and his lion; a screaming woman; a clutching hand; a floating head; a flaming skeleton; Emilio, the chef; his wife; her lover; a hanging woman; an executioner; and (ghost number 12) Dr. Zorba himself. After several "horrific" encounters, Buck discovers hidden money while sliding down the bannister. Ben is revealed to be unscrupulous, trying to get all of Dr. Zorba's money for himself. During a seance, Dr. Zorba's ghost saves Buck from being smothered by the lawyer. The apparition then forces Ben into the same "suffocation bed" in which the lawyer killed Zorba. Presumably, Ben becomes the 13th ghost. The rest of the ghosts vacate the house, leaving a spectral "House for Sale" on the front door.

—Jim Knüsch

The Lady from Shanghai

A seaman named Mike O'Hara picks up a lady in Central Park and defends her from muggers. The next day, her husband, Arthur Bannister, "the best criminal lawyer in the world", offers him a job sailing Bannister's yacht from New York to San Francisco. There, a murder occurs, a trial occurs, and a climax occurs in a fun house. Simple, no?

Decidedly no. Orson Welles' *THE LADY FROM SHANGHAI* (1948) is a complex, confusing film, with double and triple crosses coming from every direction, overlaid with the ripest collection of characters this side of your local madhouse. Halfway through the movie, I still hadn't decided whether I liked it or not, but I couldn't stop watching these people.



Orson Welles, as Mike, becomes mesmerized by Elsa, the woman he rescued. He keeps staring at her as if she were a cross between Venus and Medusa. As Elsa, Rita Hayworth (with a platinum-blond hairdo) projects a clear, cold, passive beauty, lush yet somehow repellent. Everett Sloane, playing her crippled husband, is menacing as he lopes about on his walking stick, head thrust forward like a heron looking for a juicy young fish. Best of all is Glenn Anders as George Grisby, Bannister's law partner. He is an evil clown with mad, shining eyes and a voice cracking with cruel mockery and concealed pain. (I like his name being one letter away from "grisly".)

The tension among these four is terrific as they backbite their way up the coast of Mexico, like a rubber band stretched repeatedly to the breaking point. I kept thinking that something terrible was happening just off screen. Who wants who to do what to whom is never clear until the moment it happens, and then one is left wondering why.

The trial is hysterical. I haven't seen anything like it since the last version of *Alice in Wonderland*. The befuddled judge can't maintain order; the prosecutor can't get through to the sneezing, snoring jury; and the wonderfully weird crowd watches and wisecracks with the joyous avidity of people viewing a trapeze act or a suicide on a ledge. Arthur Bannister, the great defender, becomes the ringmaster of this loony circus, strutting around on his sticks, cracking jokes, hobnobbing with the jury (him, they listen to!), and having a fine old time. The prosecutor puts him on the

stand. Silly questions are asked, sillier answers are given. Not to be outdone, Banister puts himself on the stand and asks himself pointless questions. By this time, the judge, the jury, and the crowd are laughing so hard you can hardly hear his answers. The defendant, poor soul, looks glum. His life depends on these yo-yos. I don't know if I've ever seen a more frightening send-up of our system of justice.

After the trial comes a suicide attempt, a fight in the judge's chambers (the main object of which seems to be the breaking of as much furniture as possible), a phone call to a Chinese butler whom I never knew existed, and a trip to a Chinese theatre where they also seem to be holding a trial. By this time I was quite dizzy, and it seemed logical to end up in the crazy house of a deserted amusement park, with its trick slides, rotating floors, and bogey masks. The shoot-out in the hall of mirrors is the ultimate confusion, multiple images shattering in a fine, shard-splintering finale.

I still don't know if this is a great movie, or even a good one, but it certainly makes one helluva ride.

—Ken Schachtman



Over the extensive and no doubt blasphemous objections of Columbia Pictures studio chief Harry Cohn, Orson Welles dyed Rita Hayworth's Technicolor-red tresses platinum blonde for 1948's *THE LADY FROM SHANGHAI*.

THE APE

Boris Karloff's one excursion into Monogram horror, *THE APE* (1940), is a ludicrous but not unwatchable 61 minutes of "sinister science" melodramatics. It's not a good film in any useful sense of that word, but the one thing it has going for it is a sincere portrayal by

Karloff. In fact, *THE APE* might well be the last Z-grade film in which the actor bothered to turn in a decent performance.

The slim story, suggested by a play by Adam Hull Shirk and adapted for the screen by Curt Siodmak, has Karloff as a slightly demented small-town doctor anxious to cure a paralyzed girl (Maris Wrixon) via injections of human spinal fluid. Donning the pelt of an escaped circus ape, Karloff slays one of his neighbors and uses his spinal fluid to cure Wrixon.

Despite Karloff's earnest performance, his character comes off as one of the most schizophrenic mad doctors this side of Dr. Jekyll: Karloff rebounds between kindly father figure to the girl and cold-blooded killer of local residents. No effort is made to reconcile these two sides of the character, and his climactic death (he's shot to death by a posse member) seems well-earned. Yet Karloff, serious and straightforward, rises effortlessly above the material with the sort of performance that, in later years, he no longer bothered to give when he thought a picture was beneath him. It's funny to find him so sincere in an insignificant film like *THE APE* when he's so phony and exaggeratedly sinister in much-better-made pictures of the 40s, such as *BLACK FRIDAY* (1940), *THE CLIMAX* (1944), and *HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN* (1944).

Gene O'Donnell, who played Maris Wrixon's boyfriend in *THE APE*, said about dear Boris in a recent interview, "Boris Karloff was just a dream to work with, an absolute dream. He was cooperative and meticulous and he told wonderful stories on the set. He told me I was good in the picture. By the way, a friend of mine was on the vice squad in Los Angeles, and one time he arrested a number of prostitutes. He asked them who was the best 'swordsmen' in Hollywood, and they answered, 'Why, Boris Karloff, without a doubt.'"

—Tom Weaver



Boris Karloff meets *THE APE* (1940). Anyone for a quick chorus of "I've Got Me Under Your Skin"?

THE MAN WITH X-RAY EYES

X—THE MAN WITH X-RAY EYES (1963) is a well-made, thoughtful sci-fi thriller from Roger Corman (taking a brief break from his Poe cycle). Star Ray Milland is quite believable as a scientist whose experiments with a new drug enable him to see through objects. Testing it on himself (Didn't he ever see 1933's THE INVISIBLE MAN? That's a horror no-no), Milland is exhilarated at seeing through, first, his own hand; then chairs and walls; and finally even a building (the last effect cheaply but effectively achieved by using one that was under construction). When he accidentally kills a colleague, Milland is forced to flee; he finds work in a sideshow run by slimy Don Rickles (who delivers a good, smarmy performance, briefly reminding one that the insult comic studied drama in New York). The best lines come in these carnival scenes.

Milland wants to use his discovery for the good of humanity; Rickles, had he the power, would use it to look at "all the naked broads". (He's probably the guy who bought those X-ray specs advertised in comics.) Milland's great discovery is his curse, forcing him to see into dimensions beyond his powers of comprehension. Stumbling into the desert, Milland finds a revival meeting with a fire-and-brimstone preacher berating the crowd. Milland falls to his knees before the preacher, who,



Don Rickles, whose later career consisted almost entirely of referring to his fellow human beings as hockey pucks, got his start as a legit actor in such films as X—THE MAN WITH X-RAY EYES (1963).

when he hears what the suffering doctor is experiencing, exhorts, "If thine eyes offend thee, pluck them out!" The faithful take up the chant, shouting, "Pluck them out! Pluck them out!" Milland, his eyes now completely black, takes the mob literally, and gashes out his eyes. Here, the film

abruptly ends, although rumor has it that Milland was supposed to lift his bloodied face and cry out "I can still see!" One wonders why such a powerful line, lasting only seconds, was cut, as it would have amplified the horror to truly epic proportions.

—Kevin G. Shinnick

DIAMONDS ARE FOREVER

DIAMONDS ARE FOREVER (1971) marked the return of Sean Connery to the role of James Bond after a one-picture absence. Though the film is not as visually spectacular as Connery's last outing, YOU ONLY LIVE TWICE (1967), the actor is used here to better advantage. DIAMONDS is not in the same league as ON HER MAJESTY'S SECRET SERVICE (1969), which starred George Lazenby as 007, but it has plenty of the Bond style missing from the next film, LIVE AND LET DIE (1973). We are treated to some wonderful hero/villain repartee and dialogue in Connery's last "Broccoli Bond", but there is a lack of tension and we are left with one of the weaker Bond finales. Indeed, the major problem with DIAMONDS is the needlessly confusing plot. To summarize, a trail of diamond smugglers leads Bond to Las Vegas and Tiffany Case (Jill St. John), the next link in the pipeline. Here we discover that Blofeld (Charles Gray, the third actor to portray the

leader of SPECTRE, following Donald Pleasence and Telly Savalas) is posing as billionaire recluse Willard Whyte. He's used the diamonds to build a deadly laser satellite and intends to hold the world for ransom. Bond discovers Blofeld's control center on an oil rig and destroys the operation. This is the last "Broccoli Bond" to feature SPECTRE; the organization and Blofeld are sorely missed in the Bond films today.

Circus Circus, the unique Las Vegas casino where the kids can enjoy acrobatic acts and carnival games while Mom and Dad gamble, is the setting for the sequence in which Felix Leiter and the CIA have Tiffany under surveillance, hoping she will lead them to the head of the smuggling operation.

The casino's attractions are fully visible as Tiffany plays blackjack and a water-balloon game, all "fixed" by the CIA. She finally gives the agents the slip by ducking out the back exit of an woman-into-ape transformation show.

It was fun, visiting Circus Circus recently, to play the same balloon game, and have a fan's satisfaction at being right there on a Bond "set"!

—Paul Scrabo

The film opens with Gary Busey, as Frankie, sitting in a darkened room, smearing clown make-up on his face. The results are crude, giving Busey the look of a slasher-film psycho preparing to go on a rampage. Only when he opens his trailer door, revealing brightly lit amusement-park rides outside, do we see that he is a carnival worker, a "carny", as they call themselves.

One of the points that CARNY (1980) tries to make is that the carnival is a world unto itself. The film cynically depicts this

CARNY

world as a sleazy place where, under the facade of a fun-filled amusement park, customers are robbed of their money while playing games that only look easy to win. When they see somebody walk off with a prize—never realizing that the winner was in fact the carnival manager, Patch—they're hooked. (Patch is played by rock star Robbie Robertson, who also co-wrote and produced the movie).

Frankie's job is to sit in a cage suspended over a pool of water, into which

patrons try to dunk him by hitting a target with a ball. Of course, to make any money from this, Frankie has to make the customer *want* to dunk him. He does this by engaging passers-by in heavy verbal abuse, becoming so obnoxious that people gladly pay to drown him.

Jodie Foster plays Donna, a teenage runaway who joins this modern band of gypsies. Falling in love with Frankie—as well as having a fling with Patch—Donna soon learns to fit in with the bunch by becoming a midway hawker. She also discovers the dark side of carny life when a local businessman decides he wants a lot more than his usual payoff. Being an under-the-hat operation, the carny people can't very well go to the police; instead, they try to resolve the matter on their own.

Able directed by Robert Kaylor, the film offers a fascinating peek into sleazy carnival life without romanticizing it. Look for another excellent performance by veteran actor Elisha Cook as On Your Mark, in a role that lends gritty realism to the carny atmosphere.

—Sean Farrell

ESCAPE from the PLANET of the APES



Kim Hunter and Roddy McDowall

A wonderful piece of satire, called "The Milking of the Planet That Went Ape", came to my attention years ago, when, monthly, I'd devour the latest copy of *Mad* magazine.

Nothing was sacred to *Mad*. (Nothing should be.) Still, I must defend two movies from the series. The first, *THE PLANET OF THE APES* (1968), is one of my favorite sci-fi films. The other is *ESCAPE FROM THE*

PLANET OF THE APES (1971), the third in the series. No, it's not of the same calibre as *PLANET*, but *ESCAPE* has a wonderful plot and, of course, those two treasures: Kim Hunter and Roddy McDowall.

Arriving in the 20th century, a quantum leap back in time for our chimpanzee heroes, Zira and Cornelius are placed in a zoo infirmary, where vets Dr. Louis Dickson (Bradford Dillman) and his associate, Dr. Stevie Brent (Natalie Trundy), are startled to find that the chimps can speak. (They also find that the two are intelligent and have a sense of humor.) Communication established, the foursome begin to trust each other and enjoy each others' company. Dickson feels the chimps' true nature must be made public, but "to the right people at the right time".

A presidential advisory hearing is held and, though the members of the committee are shocked, the facts are undeniable. The two chimps are checked into a hotel, taken shopping, and given a tour of the city. Sadly, though not unexpectedly, this cannot last.

While touring a local museum, Zira faints in front of the gorilla exhibit. Thinking it was the shock of the exhibit, the President's scientific advisor (Eric Braeden) helps her up and escorts her home, where he learns that Zira is pregnant. Zira tells him what she saw through the spacecraft window when she left Earth, all those years in the future: "Bright, white, blinding light. And then we saw the rim of the Earth melt. Then there was a tornado in the sky." The future is clear. Intelligent apes will someday dominate the planet and destroy it. Should the chimps be destroyed? The President (William Windom) says no. His advisor thinks otherwise. Taking into account Zira's profession, that of a researcher performing experiments on live humans in her own time, the President's committee decides to terminate her pregnancy and render both her and Cornelius unable to reproduce. Scientist Zira is philosophical about the decision, stating that she herself has done as much and more, but Cornelius is more realistic: he believes they will not be allowed to live at all. Together they escape the installment as the mother-to-be goes into labor. Where to go now?

The circus, of course.

And who better to run the circus than Ricardo Montalban. Montalban plays Armando, who Dickson and Brent know well. In a circus tent, Zira gives birth to a healthy male baby, but they are found out and she and Cornelius decide to hit the road again. Before they go, Zira says goodbye to Heloise, a circus chimp. Unknown to anyone, even the audience, she switches babies with Heloise. When Zira, Cornelius, and Heloise's child are run to ground and killed, we go back to the circus. There, Armando is chatting with his caged baby chimp, discussing how intelligent he is—but then, so were the chimp's parents.

—Jessie Lilley

GORILLA AT LARGE



It took a miracle worker to win an Oscar after starring in GORILLA AT LARGE.

It's films like *GORILLA AT LARGE* that put the final nail in the coffin of 3-D. Several murders take place at a circus. Police suspect that the show's gorilla has been escaping and committing the crimes. The real killer, though, is a member of the cast, and you will probably laugh yourself silly when you find out who it is. Anne Bancroft would probably like to forget this one. She plays an aerialist who swings high above the big top, sans net. Indeed, she risks falling into the gorilla cages below (no such luck, fans!). Raymond Burr had been in *BRIDE OF THE GORILLA* (1951) and was probably pretty sick of being in bad simian flicks. He plays the owner of the circus so broadly that he might just as well wear a sign reading "red herring". Cameron Mitchell's career hadn't yet begun its decline; indeed, he had *CAROUSEL* (1956) coming up. Here, he's the romantic lead, who is the main suspect for the killings. The forces of justice are represented by Lee J. Cobb and a dumb patrolman played with a hilarious brogue by Lee Marvin. Marvin probably realized that the film couldn't be taken seriously. George Barrows, in the title role, makes a monkey out of the rest of the cast.

Even the 3-D is rather (pardon the pun) flat. The film was aired in the early 80s on WOR-TV, with horror-host great Zachery presiding. Zach gave the film all the respect it deserved, and his comic bits were delightful, especially those involving his ape friend trying to have his way with Zach's wife, Isobel. They should release Zachery's scenes and lock up *GORILLA AT LARGE*.

—Kevin G. Shinnick

House of Frankenstein



Peter Coe, J. Carroll Naish, Lionel Atwill, Sig Rumann, and Anne Gwynne in Universal's *HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN* (1944).

The circus-of-sorts here is Professor Bruno Lampini's traveling "Chamber of Horrors", which serves as a cover for fugitive mad scientist Boris Karloff and his hunchback henchman, J. Carroll Naish, who grimly plot to unearth the journals of the deceased Dr. Frankenstein in order to continue his gruesome experiments.

The movie is a bit of a three-ring circus in itself, with Dracula, the Wolf Man, and the Monster vying for the audience's attention. The count comes off best, thanks to John Carradine's suave underplaying in what is perhaps the best portrayal of the role by an American actor. Carradine's

Dracula is a creature of silky, sinister elegance, so upper-crust he wouldn't dream of indulging in his indelicate bloodsucking activities except in bat form (as if in fear that it might wrinkle his evening clothes).

As is usually the case in the latter part of Universal's horror cycle, the juvenile, cliché-packed script provides the weakest link in a film that almost belies its less-than-exalted reputation. In most other respects, *HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN* is a surprisingly well-made programmer. The cast troupes through the nonsensical plot with gallant enthusiasm, although Karloff hovers over the whole charade like a dis-

interested ghost, apparently wishing he was back on Broadway in *ARSENIC AND OLD LACE*.

Director Erle C. Kenton keeps the proceedings moving at a pace almost too frantic; photographer George Robinson—one of the unsung heroes of the Universal horror factory—attends to the atmospheric most skillfully. The virtuoso crane shot of Dracula racing uphill to the safety of his coffin as the sun breaks through the morning clouds, filmed entirely on a sound stage, is a tribute to the studio's dazzling technical prowess.

—Michael Brunas

THE SHE CREATURE

A seaside fun fair sets the scene for an occultist's renegade experiments in regression in *THE SHE CREATURE* (1966), one of American International's least-appealing drive-in shockers. Bleak and unrelentingly dull, with a hangdog air hovering over it like a shroud, this Alex Gordon shoe-stringer sought to capitalize on a topic that was capturing the public's imagination around this time.

Long before Shirley MacLaine made reincarnation a household word, Pueblo housewife Virginia Tighe claimed to have lived a score of past lives, including that of a 19th-century Irish woman named Bridey Murphy. Wasting little time, Hollywood jumped on the bandwagon with *THE SEARCH FOR BRIDEY MURPHY* in 1956, which promptly inspired a rash of

dismal, B-grade regression melodramas including *I'VE LIVED BEFORE* (1956), *FRIGHT* (1957, a.k.a. *THE SPELL OF THE HYPNOTIST*), and Roger Corman's *THE UNDEAD* (1957), all of which vied for top honors in the tedium department.

Though no better than the rest, *THE SHE CREATURE* at least sports a rather picturesque monster—a human crustacean with a long, spiky tail—that occasionally rouses us out of our malaise. One of special-effects ace Paul Blaisdell's most flamboyant creations, the She Creature is gratuitously shoehorned into the plot to give it some kiddie-matinee flair. Blaisdell tailored a number of his monster outfits to suit his own diminutive frame; consequently, their effectiveness is compromised when they share the screen with

taller performers. (Blaisdell got further mileage out of his Creature get-up in 1957's *VOODOO WOMAN* and 1959's *GHOST OF DRAGSTRIP HOLLOW*.)

Producer Gordon, who had a penchant for peopling his youth-oriented pictures with greying character players from Hollywood's past, miscast former Boston Blackie Chester Morris in the lead role of Carol Lombardi. (Peter Lorre was originally sought for the part, but wisely turned it down.) Looking hopelessly outdated in slicked-back black hair, mustache, and cape, the arrogant Lombardi preys upon sloe-eyed carnival waif Andrea (Marla English), hurtling her soul back to 17th-century England. For an encore, he materializes a prehistoric marine creature, Andrea's alter ego from a bygone age, which surfaces

from the sea upon his command and crushes anyone in its path. After an interminable amount of soul-regression claptrap and pulp-novel melodramatics, the swell-headed Lombardi gets his just deserts at the hands of his crusty henchwoman, and Andrea finds salvation in the arms of the doctor's stolid rival, Ted Erickson (Lance Fuller).

In his prime, Bela Lugosi would have been an ideal choice to play the unscrupulous Dr. Lombardi. (Had Bela been alive at the time the picture was produced, and had his physical health permitted it, there's little doubt that Alex Gordon would have given the role to his old friend.) Another fine choice would have been Francis Lederer, who proved his worth in such genre outings as *THE RETURN OF DRACULA* (1958) and *THE TERROR IS A MAN* (1959). Chester Morris is simply all wrong for the part. Lacking the prerequisite Continental ambience, his villainous posturings and, above all, his impassioned desire for the voluptuous (and



Ms. Creature

much younger) Marla English are just plain embarrassing.

Striving mightily for atmosphere and chills, *THE SHE CREATURE* achieves only a modicum of success in both areas. As usual, Ronald Stein's moody score is an asset, and Frederick West's murky (day-for-night?) seascapes provide some much-needed local color. However, veteran director Edward L. Cahn, a graduate of the "traffic cop" school of film directing, defeats their efforts with his flat, unimaginative style. Only rarely (as in 1958's suspenseful *IT! THE TERROR FROM BEYOND SPACE* and the same year's eerie *CURSE OF THE FACELESS MAN*) did Cahn demonstrate any *simpatico* with the material at hand.

A resounding dud, *THE SHE CREATURE* is one of those awful AIP films that can't even be recommended for a few derisive chuckles. Drab, downbeat, and oh-so-serious, it's deadly going all the way.

—John Brunas

CHARLIE CHAN AT THE CIRCUS

The entire Chan clan—Charlie, Mama, and all twelve progeny—puts in one of its rare group appearances in 20th Century Fox's *CHARLIE CHAN AT THE CIRCUS* (1936), providing the opening scenes of this pleasant whodunnit with fine family values and an understated plea for planned parenthood. The rotund Oriental sleuth has been offered free passes to the Kinney and Gaines Combined Circus by Joe Kinney, an unsavory character who's been receiving letters of a threatening nature. The letters are only a prelude: before Charlie, family in tow, has a chance to investigate, Kinney is found dead in the circus business wagon, his neck broken, apparently by a wandering gorilla. Our hirsute cousin aside, there are a good half-dozen suspects for Charlie to grill, including Kinney's partner John Gaines (Francis Ford), ex-girlfriend Nellie Farrell (Druce Leyton), Nellie's brother Dan (Boothe Hayward), snake handler Tom Holt (J. Carroll Naish), and animal trainer Hal Blake (John McGuire).

CHARLIE CHAN AT THE CIRCUS bears more than a faint resemblance to a standard Perry Mason mystery. As with many Masons (but surprisingly few Chans), the victim-to-be spends most of the film's opening scenes making himself thoroughly disagreeable to the folks who—once he's dead—will be suspected of killing him. (Another tie-in: there's a 1952 Mason novel by Erle Stanley Gardner, *The Case of the Grinning Gorilla*, later filmed for the TV series, in which an ape is accused of murder.) The formula works as

well with Charlie as it does with Perry; still, it was rarely used again.

The 11th film in a series numbering 44, *CHARLIE CHAN AT THE CIRCUS* starred Swedish actor Warner Oland as author Earl Derr Biggers' Chinese police detective and Keye Luke as number one son Lee Chan. It's an enjoyable if not superior entry, sparked by humor that had yet to

overwhelm the series' mystery elements. Charlie is handed a fair share of Chanisms to spout ("Mind like parachute—only function when open") and Lee, in a bow to *THE UNHOLY THREE*, gets gussied up in drag and, depositing the requisite midget-dressed-as-a-baby in a perambulator, sets out to crack the case himself.

—Richard Valley



Lee Chan and his father Charlie are in on the capture of the chief murder suspect: a gorilla. That's Keye Luke (LEFT) as Lee and Warner Oland (RIGHT) as Charlie.



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Captive Wild Woman

Produced during a period in Hollywood history in which "B" horror films proliferated, this is a surprisingly nifty little shocker, produced with enough care to maintain one's interest throughout. It tells the story of an animal trainer who has captured an unusually intelligent female gorilla, around which he intends to build a circus act. His fiancée has a sister diagnosed with a glandular disorder; the sister is under the care of a specialist, Dr. Walters. When the doctor is invited to visit the circus grounds, he becomes fascinated with the ape, has it stolen from its cage, and begins conducting experiments to try to evolve it into human form.

The 1943 film contains above-average performances overall, but of special note is the welcome presence of John Carradine as the suitably mad Dr. Walters. In his first leading role in a Universal chiller, Carradine is believably warped. From his very first scene with Evelyn Ankers and Martha MacVicar, though he is simply interviewing Ankers about her sister's illness, we know it would probably be better for them to leave quietly and seek a second opinion. As one of the studio's more eloquent mad scientists, Carradine sinks his teeth into the scenery without chewing it noticeably—a nice warm-up before stepping into the role of Count Dracula the following year in *HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN*.

The only new face in the cast is that of the title

character, the ape-turned-woman, named Paula Dupree by her creator. Portrayed by Acquanetta, the "Venezuelan Volcano", Dupree might have been a compelling character had she been explored further and played by an actress with some range. Acquanetta was not much of a performer by any standards, but she did have the perfect look for the part. An exotic beauty, she manages to look "newborn" when her face is first revealed to the camera, and later her natural naïveté and stiffness work for Paula, who is, fortunately, without dialogue.

Though the circus setting is essential to the story, viewers may find the profusion of stock footage from *THE BIG CAGE*, a 1933 Universal film starring Clyde Beatty, a bit jarring. Beatty makes a passable double for Milburn Stone, but it's obvious that we are watching shots from another movie. Nevertheless, the film manages to move at a nice pace, thanks to director Edward Dmytryk.

The first of a series of three films, *CAPTIVE WILD WOMAN* is by far the most worthy (1944's *JUNGLE WOMAN* and 1945's *JUNGLE CAPTIVE* fall short in almost every department). It was made at a time when the studio was looking for new monsters for its line-up, and the creation of Paula Dupree was an interesting side step. A "B" thriller it is, but a notch above average, and the kind of fare that will not let fans down.

—Richard Scrivani



Paula Dupree



As 4E Ackerman said 'way back in the April 1961 issue of Famous Monsters, "When Gorgo's Mama comes to town, London Bridge is falling down!"

GORGO

Come one, come all! See the greatest mother-and-daughter act of all time! London is at their feet—Step turn kick turn—Whoops! There goes Big Ben!

Gorgo, Rodan, the Beast from 20,000 Fathoms, Godzilla (before he became a comedy act), even Reptilicus: I love them all. These rubber monstrosities, trampling cities and citizens, defying armies, navies, and air forces, satisfy an atavistic urge from the darker side of my soul. Who among us, given this kind of power, would behave better? (Yes, Gulliver did, but I always thought he was a bit of a sap.) These saurian absurdities are the ultimate anarchists, immune to the lures of civilization.

GORGO is a story about how mankind inevitably misuses and degrades that which it does not understand. Sound pretentious? Okay, let's call it an old-fashioned morality play: greed leads to cruelty leads to retribution. It is greed that allows civilization to get its talons into young Gorgo. Here is a survivor from the dim past, of incalculable value to science. But the man who captures the beast wants more than a finder's fee, so the poor thing ends up the prime attraction in a London circus where the chumps

can gawk at it at five shillings a pop. (Maybe nobody has been able to get a clear picture of Nessie because she heard what happened to Gorgo.) When it's revealed that Gorgo is just an infant, a frightened baby, the crime becomes even more heinous.

Yes, this film is derivative. The diving-bell scene is taken from *THE BEAST FROM 20,000 FATHOMS* (1953). Some of the shots of the destruction of London seem to be lifted from the original *GODZILLA* (1956). I feel, however, that the heart of this story owes much to two Disney classics. Both *Dumbo* and *Bambi* are separated from their mothers, one of them permanently. Unlike those hapless females, however, Mother Gorgo is a matriarch to be reckoned with. When I saw this film in the theatre, too many years ago, there was cheering when she leveled half of London to get to her baby. (Maybe it's just me: When I watched the film the other day, I had already become a fan of the TV series *DINOSAURS*, so when big Gorgo finally found little Gorgo I half-expected the baby to yell "It's de Mama! It's de Mama!" I know it's anthropomorphic, but I'm a sucker for mother love.)

I have never liked zoos. I hate to see anything permanently caged. (These are just some final thoughts, so bear with me.) There was a recent TV news report of a

female circus elephant that "went mad", knocking down a tent and injuring some people. Then she tried to trample a cop. They shot her to death. I don't know how she'd been treated. I don't know if she'd had a baby taken from her, or if she just couldn't stand people anymore. (I get that way sometimes.) But I did think of GORGO.

—Ken Schachtman

The Other

Before taking up the pen, the late novelist Thomas Tryon was known as actor Tom Tryon. He appeared as Roderick Usher in a 1956 TV version of Edgar Allen Poe's *The Fall of the House of Usher*. He then went on to star in Paramount's *I MARRIED A MONSTER FROM OUTER SPACE* (1958) and the Disney comedy *MOON PILOT* (1962). His last performance was for director Otto Preminger in *THE CARDINAL* (1963), opposite Romy Schneider, John Huston, and Burgess Meredith. Like many a thespian who worked for the tyrannical Preminger, Tryon concluded that acting wasn't quite the glamorous profession it was cracked up to be, and turned to writing.

Released in 1972, *THE OTHER*, based on Tryon's first novel, is an eerie, chilling tale of the supernatural involving young twin brothers living in a rural town in 1935. Robert Mulligan directed from a script by the author.

Real twins Chris and Martin Udvarnoky portray Niles and Holland Perry, respectively. At first glance, all appears normal: merely two boys playing as boys do during the summer. However, Niles, the quiet twin, has a special gift, a psychic power that enables him to both predict future events and "see" things others cannot. His grandmother Ada (well played by Uta Hagen) recognizes this skill and allows Niles to play a "pretend" game with her. It is her hope that this game will help the boy get over a family tragedy from the previous March—as a result of which Niles' mother (Diana Muldaur of *L.A. LAW*) is grief-stricken to the point of being unstable.

Yet Ada does not realize that fantasy and reality are blurring for Niles. He is using his power to deny that the tragedy ever happened. The consequence is that Holland, a boy who gets pleasure from killing small animals, sees to it that an "accident"



befalls anybody he perceives as a threat. Then again, is it Niles...?

It is during a visit to a circus that Niles slides further into his own deadly fantasy. The circus represents a slice of the unreal in the everyday world; it is a place in which, through illusion, one can see whatever one wants. The circus setting in *THE OTHER* is a foreshadowing device, showing us that Niles is also using his own skills of illusion—his psychic power—to create his own reality. It's no surprise that he gets from the circus his inspiration on how to dispatch two of his victims, especially the gruesome death he has in store for his newborn niece (when he views a dead baby floating in a bottle in a sideshow exhibit).

THE OTHER's plot moves at a leisurely pace, but viewers are kept always at the edge of their seats, watching the subtle horrors unfold without explicit gore or violence. The superb storytelling and strong characterizations build suspense, letting the viewer anticipate—and dread—the inevitable conclusion.

—Sean Farrell



Cesare (Conrad Veidt) spends a night on the expressionistic town in 1919's THE CABINET OF DR. CALIGARI.

The Cabinet

of

Dr. Caligari

The great days of the silent horror cinema have left us with many indelible images. Once experienced, who could forget the spidery Max Schreck as he creeps through the shadows of *NOSFERATU* (1922), Lon Chaney's unmasking in *THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA* (1925), or the strangely beautiful Robotrix (Brigitte Helm) as she slowly moves down a glowing runway in *METROPOLIS* (1926)?

Included in the above esteemed group of films is *THE CABINET OF DR. CALIGARI* (1919). The narrative, told in flashback, concerns the recurrence of an 11th-century myth involving an evil doctor who utilizes a helpless somnambulist to do his bidding. The mysterious Dr. Caligari (Werner Krauss) appears in the small village of Holstenwall to participate in a carnival as a sideshow attraction. Under his command, the sleepwalker Cesare (Conrad Veidt) can foretell the future of any paying customer.

Soon after the doctor's arrival, both the town clerk, who refused Caligari an exhibitor's permit, and one of the thrill-seekers are found murdered. It is discovered that the doctor wills Cesare to commit the murders in order to fulfill the somnambulist's predictions of death. After Cesare fails to abduct the fiancée (Lil Dagover) of the narrator (Friedrich Feher), Caligari is captured and put in an insane asylum. At this point, we return to the present to realize that it is the narrator who's truly mad, fabricating a delusional tale involving characters based on fellow inmates (Cesare and the fiancée) and the asylum's director (Caligari).

The most striking aspect of *THE CABINET OF DR. CALIGARI* is its wonderfully expressionistic sets designed by Hermann Warm, Walter Reinmann, and Walter Rohrich. The discovery of the narrator's madness is an unexpected shock for the viewer (although today, as a result of overuse, it's considered a cliché), but with that realization comes the understanding of the bizarre "mise-en-scene" used throughout the film: everything, of course, is being filtered through the madman's mind.

Although the painted sets are obviously constructed of false fronts, the strength of the art direction is not diminished in any way. In fact, for that very rea-

son, the viewer is thrust into the horrific world of the narrator as characters move through twisted, claustrophobic landscapes and off-balanced rooms.

CALIGARI's many unforgettable images include the emaciated, black-clad Cesare awakening from his 25-year slumber; a room with a rear wall completely dominated by an enormous, glowing moon-like shape (a possible reference to the "lunatic" perspective of the narrative); Dr. Caligari's grotesque daily feeding of the somnambulist as he props him up in the coffin-shaped cabinet; and Cesare's search for the girl as he slides along the walls of the winding streets. Even after 70 years, the disturbing intensity of these haunting images has hardly been equalled.

After seeing the film, the viewer is left both startled and amazed by its ingenuity. Within the boundaries of a small production and about 55 minutes of screen time, a milestone of horror was created. It's ironic that, with the development of space-age technology and access to unlimited budgets, films do not necessarily attain the artistry of *THE CABINET OF DR. CALIGARI*. Many of the best films from the glorious silent age were born of the imaginations of great craftsmen and dreamers—something seldom seen today.

—Michael O. Yaccarino





HORROR ITALIAN STYLE

Freda-Bava-Argento—Part Three

by Bill Amazzini

Because *BLACK SUNDAY* continued to rake in profits from its American release, American International Pictures considered Mario Bava a hot property. His next film, *LA RAGAZZA CHE SAPEVA TROPPO*, was lensed in 1962, but didn't grace a U. S. screen until 1964. As the precursor for the giallo genre, it emerges as a slick mystery thriller rather than a horror film, or, as Bava admitted, "a thinly disguised Hitchcockian parody". (The English

translation of the title is *THE GIRL WHO KNEW TOO MUCH*.) Leticia Roman is the heroine who witnesses the death of a stabbing victim, and, naturally, gets a good look at the killer's face. The killer tries to silence her and the film trots out a series of red herrings until its bleak conclusion.

AIP did not like the black humor and somber tones of *LA RAGAZZA CHE SAPEVA TROPPO*, so the company proceeded



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to add four minutes of "humorous" footage, delete Roberto Nicolosi's score, add one by Les Baxter (yet again), and change the ending. Along with that of Dario Argento, Mario Bava's work constantly suffered from extensive interference and censorship in the States. (This continued with Bava's next film, *THE THREE FACES OF FEAR*). *LA RAGAZZA* became *THE EVIL EYE* and was released on the bottom half of a drive-in double bill. The "A" feature was *PAJAMA PARTY*, which made the insult even worse. AIP later changed *THE THREE FACES OF FEAR* to *BLACK SABBATH*, rearranged the sequence of the stories, and altered the re-dubbed "The Telephone" episode.

While Mario Bava was preparing *BLACK SABBATH* in 1962, Riccardo Freda returned to the genre in "grande gusto" by teaming with Barbara Steele one final time in a sublime follow-up to *THE HORRIBLE DR. HICHCOCK* (1962). Though not a direct sequel to *HICHCOCK*, 1963's *LO SPETTRO*—released in America as *THE GHOST*—would be Freda's horrific swan song, at least until 1980. *THE GHOST* ranks as one of the screen's most terrifying excursions into insanity, topped only by Henri-Georges Clouzot's *DIABOLIQUE*, made eight years earlier.

Barbara Steele, with the aid of lover Peter Baldwin, poisons husband Elio Jotta (as the horrible physician of the previous film). It seems Jotta has a vast supply of jewels stashed away in the family castle and greedy Barbara wants it all. Unbeknownst to Steele, Jotta has some diabolical plans of his own and, before the final credits roll, the unscrupulous wife has become a victim of her own folly.

THE GHOST is to the horror film what Ravel's "Bolero" is to classical music. Freda begins the film quite slowly and subtly. The pace builds as a series of strange occurrences arise and catch the audience off-balance. Time-honored clichés of the genre (such as flashes of lightning, billowing curtains, and wind suddenly opening a window) are given fresh life by Freda; the director's atmospheric color compositions again outweigh the narrative pace of his film.

Though *THE HORRIBLE DR. HICHCOCK* is the better movie, *THE GHOST* shows Freda at the peak of his art. The final half hour builds to a crescendo of bone-chilling horror. Barbara Steele gives one of her finest performances as her mental state slowly deteriorates before our eyes.

The year 1963 brought an end to the horror-film collaborations of Mario

Bava, Riccardo Freda, and Barbara Steele. Bava continued to traffic in terror until his death, but Freda, as already noted, did not return to the field for close to two decades. After the success of *BLACK SUNDAY* (1961) and the Hitchcock films, many lesser Italian directors jumped on the fright-film bandwagon, casting Steele in order to bolster their relatively minor excursions in the genre. These films ranged from the mediocre (Massimo Pupillo's *CIRQUE TOMBE PER UN MEDIUM*, released in 1966 as *TERROR CREATURES FROM THE GRAVE*; Michael Reeves' *LA SORELLA DI SATANA*, released in 1965 as *THE SHE BEAST*; and Mario Caianos' *AMANTI D'OLTRETOMBA*, released in



PREVIOUS PAGE: Barbara Steele took a second shot at the horrible Dr. Hichcock in 1962's *THE GHOST*. **RIGHT:** Would you steal a used ring from this woman? Jacqueline Soussard did, in the first of the three stories making up 1964's *BLACK SABBATH*, and didn't live to regret it.



LEFT: Boris Karloff, the one and only King of Horror, introduced each of *BLACK SABBATH*'s three tales and starred as Gorca "The Wurdulak" in the spine-chilling finale. Here, Karloff kidnaps and puts the bite on his grandchild. **BELOW:** Jacqueline Soussard awaits the woman from the previous page in *BLACK SABBATH*.

1965 as *NIGHTMARE CASTLE*) to the brilliant (Antonio Margheritis' *LA DANZA MACABRA*, released in 1964 as *CASTLE OF BLOOD*; the same director's *I LUNGHI CAPELLI DELLA MORTE*, released in 1964 as *THE LONG HAIR OF DEATH*; and Camillo Mastrocinque's *UN ANGELO PER SATANA*, released in 1966 as *AN ANGEL FOR SATAN*). Federico Fellini cast Steele in his autobiographical *8½* (1965) and Vernon Sewell starred her with Boris Karloff and Christopher Lee in *THE CRIMSON CULT* (1968), one of Karloff's final films. Steele appeared sporadically in movies throughout the 70s before joining forces with Dan Curtis to produce the highly successful miniseries *THE WINDS OF WAR* (1983) and its sequel *WAR AND REMEMBRANCE* (1988). Steele made a triumphant return to horror as Dr. Julia Hoffman in NBC's prime-time remake of *DARK SHADOWS*, but poor scheduling on the part of the network and misguided loyalty for the original series on the part of "Shadowites" brought it to an abrupt and unnecessary end after 13 episodes.

While Barbara Steele reigned as the scream queen of 60s horror, Mario Bava endeavored to make another film equal to *BLACK SUNDAY*. The result was what I refer to as Bava's "greatest hits" package: *I TRE VOLTI DELLA PAURA*, released by American International Pictures in 1963 as *BLACK SABBATH*.

The film is a series of set pieces introduced by horror icon Boris Karloff, who also stars in the lengthiest of the stories. "The Drop of Water", which opens *BLACK SABBATH*, is an exercise in terror about a nurse (Jacqueline Soussard) who steals a ring from a clairvoyant; the clairvoyant's ghost subsequently haunts her in order to get it back. Though it sounds simple, Bava makes the most of the tale by stressing, through light and shadow, the nurse's complete and utter isolation. A neon sign just outside the apartment blinks on and off through a stained-glass window, and the amplified sound of dripping water contributes greatly to the sequence's overwhelming sense of foreboding.

Bill Amazzini is a devoted fan of Italian horror and committed to preserving the heritage of classic films.

The second episode, called "The Telephone", provides a hint of what Bava would give us in his stunning *SEI DONNE PER L'ASSASSINO*. In typical giallo style, Bava tells the story of a prostitute (Michele Mercier) who is terrorized by phone calls and asks a friend (Lydia Alfonsi) to stay with her. When the murderous caller breaks into the apartment, he kills the friend in error. The prostitute stabs him to death and, thinking herself safe, is devastated when the phone starts to ring once again. In marked contrast to the rest of the film, Bava makes vivid use of bright colors and hand-held camerawork in this segment.

The final episode, based on Alexi Tolstoy's "The Wurdulak", is Bava's small homage to his own *BLACK SUNDAY*. (The story might almost be set in the Moldavian countryside of the earlier film.) Boris Karloff plays Gorca, a man who rides off in search of a vampire and, succeeding in his quest, returns a vampire himself. Quickly, Gorca infects the rest of his family with vampirism. Bava fills the story with unsettling sequences, such as one in which a mother hears the cries of her newly-buried son, and finds the undead child crouching at the front door, begging to be let into the house. When a young man (Mark Damon) happens upon the family, he falls in



6323-13

love with the daughter (Suzy Anderson) and endeavors to save her. Tracking the couple down, Gorca infects the daughter, who subsequently puts the bite on our hero. Fade to black.

Many horror fans prefer "The Wurdulak" to BLACK SABBATH's sister episodes. (Who can easily forget Karloff telling his family "I'm hun-n-n-gry" upon his return?) As with BLACK SUNDAY, the original score by Roberto Nicolosi was replaced for the American International Pictures release with one by Les Baxter. BLACK SABBATH remains an uneven but nevertheless impressive exercise in style, each story presenting a different component of Bava's horror technique.

Following BLACK SABBATH, Mario Bava teamed with actor Cameron Mitchell for the minor epic LAST OF THE VIKINGS (1960), and then proceeded to make the best of his giallo films: SEI DONNE PER L'ASSASSINO, released in 1964 as BLOOD AND BLACK LACE.

Next:

BLOOD, BLACK LACE, AND MARIO BAVA



Who's that knocking at the door? No, it's not Barnacle Bill the Sailor; it's Boris the Wurdulak in Mario Bava's brilliant BLACK SABBATH (1964).

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BACK ISSUES WANTED: Films and Filming. 1969 (all), 1970 (all), 1971 (all but March, May, and Dec), 1972 (all but May, and Dec), 1973 (all), 1974 (all). Drew Sullivan, P.O. Box 604, Glen Rock, NJ 07452

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NEWS

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Film director John Landis is currently working on INNOCENT BLOOD, his first horror film since 1981's AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON. Written by Michael Wolk, a New York-based playwright and novelist, INNOCENT BLOOD deals with an undercover cop in the Mob who teams up with a female vampire.

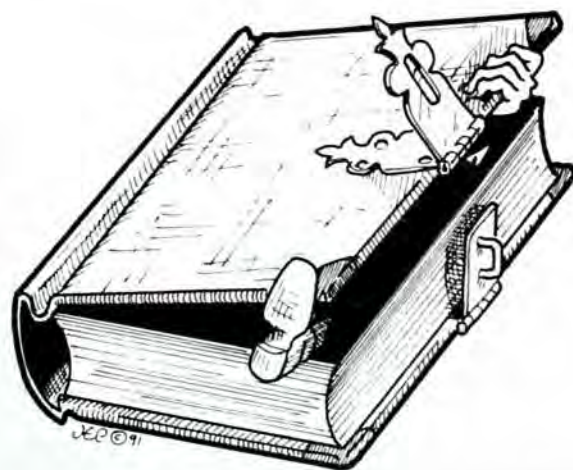
Anthony LaPaglia, most recently seen in 29TH STREET and ONE GOOD COP, stars as the undercover officer. Anne Parillaud, best known for the lead role in LA FEMME NIKITA (1990), plays the vampire. Robert Loggia and Don Rickles round out the rest of the cast. (Look for Forrest J Ackerman and Dario Argento in cameo roles!)

Produced by Lee Rich and Leslie Belzberg, INNOCENT BLOOD began principal photography on location in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

—Sean Farrell

Book Ends

The Scarlet Street Review of Books



DRACULA: THE ORIGINAL SHOOTING SCRIPT

Garrett Fort; production background by Philip J. Riley.
MagicImage Filmbooks, 1990.
287 pages—\$19.95.

The MagicImage series of Universal Filmscripts has received unanimous praise from film buffs since its inception, even though pirated copies of these very same scripts have been in unofficial circulation for ages (but don't tell Universal that!). Being a Universal-horror fan from way back, it's good to know that there is an eager market for this sort of thing: the latest release, *Dracula*, brings the series, appropriately, to 13 editions.

The publisher's chosen format, photographically reproducing the pages of an actual script with all the typos and secretarial foibles preserved intact, may not be aesthetically pleasing, but it lends an authentic, almost archival, flavor to the collection. As usual, extensive production notes are provided and, since this is a studio-authorized series, Universal has dug into its vaults to come up with a prime selection of rare stills and fascinating inter-office memoranda concerning the movie.

Especially interesting is the inclusion of a 1930 treatment by Fritz Stephani and a slightly later one by Louis Bromfield, written when the film was designed as a vehicle for Lon Chaney, Sr., who died of bronchial cancer only weeks later. (Unfortunately, the Bromfield text has been reduced to eye-straining, virtually unreadable type.) Both versions are far stronger than Garrett Fort's antiseptic, dialogue-heavy final draft, reproduced here in all its wordy splendor, which was used for the film. Apparently the studio had second thoughts about the project and eventually caved in to the whims of their squeamish story-department staff, who found the material too distasteful for 1931 audiences.

In addition, there is a charming preface by Carla Laemmle, the niece of Universal's founder, who doesn't shed much light on *DRACULA* (despite her brief appearance in the film), but tells what it was like to be a child with a Hollywood movie studio as a playground. Horror fans, that unsentimental lot, will probably be more interested in the frame blow-ups of the excised Edward Van Sloan epilogue, which was recently uncovered, although the audio track proved unsalvageable. With other assorted goodies too numerous to

mention, this book adds up to a must-have for Universal-philies.

—Michael Brunas

TELEVISION HORROR MOVIE HOSTS

Elena M. Watson
McFarland & Co., 1991.
Box 611, Jefferson, NC 28640
242 pages—\$29.95

Zacherley! Vampira! Ghoulardi! Chilly Billy! From the late 1950s, when Screen Gems unleashed its SHOCK THEATER package of Universal horror hits to television syndication, to the present day, with that Mistress of the Dark, Elvira, taking us to her heart—located, apparently, several feet below the outermost regions of her bosom—horror hosts have filled our nights with chills and laughter. Especially laughter. In Elena M. Watson's warmly nostalgic *Television Horror Movie Hosts: 68 Vampires, Mad Scientists and Other Denizens of the Late-Night Airwaves Examined and Interviewed*, a book, amazingly, even longer than its title, readers are presented with as gruesome a crew of TV personalities as they're likely to meet this side of Geraldo Rivera. As advertised, 68 hosts are interviewed, some more comprehensively than others—although it can't be too difficult to get the dirt when one's interviewee is six feet under it. Still, I come to praise Ms. Watson, not bury her: it takes a brave woman indeed to ask this crew to spill its guts.

Reading *Television Horror Movie Hosts*, I especially enjoyed those chapters on ghouls and ghoulettes with whom I was previously unfamiliar, among them Dr. Cadaverino, Sir Graves Ghastly, Morgus the Magnificent, The Bowman Body, Stella, Crematia Mortem, and the Sven-goolies father and son. (Stella, with her bed, called Bed, as a supporting character on her Philadelphia show, was a particular revelation.) I learned nothing new about the SHOCK THEATER host from my fang-torn neck of the woods, namely Zacherley, but it's pleasant having all the info presented in one book. (For the record, though, I must point out that Zach's wife does not go under the name "My Dear"; she is and forever will be Isobel to true Zach addicts.)

Television Horror Movie Hosts is a well-deserved tribute to what would clearly be called a dying breed if not for

the fact that most of the breed was dead to begin with. Since most of the personalities celebrated by Ms. Watson have long ago gotten the axe, it's not merely fun, but also worthwhile to have their histories preserved in this charming and delightful book.

—Richard Valley

THE GRETA GARBO MURDER CASE

George Baxt
St. Martin's Press, 1992.
197 pages - \$17.95.

"Today, without having made a film since 1940, she is still the greatest. She is the prototype of all stars."

—Clarence Brown, Director, 1963

That says it all about Greta Garbo. Born in 1905 to a peasant family in Sweden, Garbo came a long way. Her film career began when, working as a salesgirl for a department store in Sweden, she was chosen to appear in a publicity short entitled *HOW NOT TO DRESS* (1921). When she came to America and was signed by MGM, the publicity department didn't quite know what to do with her. Her unresponsiveness to reporters gave publicists a hint, and the Garbo legend was born. Most everyone has heard the famous "I want to be alone".

George Baxt certainly heard it. And in his own inimitable style, he makes it his own. Early on in *The Greta Garbo Murder Case*, Louis B. Mayer tells the great Garbo that he's going to loan her out to another studio. Her reply: "Louis, I don't want to be a loan." End Chapter One.

Having severed ties with MGM, Garbo notices a woman hiding near her house on the beach. The mystery begins. Baxt weaves a tale of political intrigue during World War II, with the Swedish Sphinx in the thick of it, much to her surprise and delight. A bogus movie contract funded by a well-known but mysterious tycoon, a wartime refugee, and a handful of G-men combine to make 19 chapters of the most fun I've had in a long time.

Baxt's narrative expertise, his painstaking historical research and effervescent dialogue, and his brilliantly imaginative plot don't leave you a lot of breathing time. You're caught up and whisked along to the conclusion, and left thinking, "Could this have really happened?"

Baxt's books aren't merely read; they are experienced. It's as though you are in a room with his characters, both real and fictional: you hear their voices so clearly. Erich von Stroheim, Peter Lorre, Bela Lugosi, and Jack Warner are all in on it, too! A cast of characters not easily forgotten, and a story not to be missed.

—Jessie Lilley

HORROR FILM DIRECTORS, 1931-1990

Dennis Fischer
McFarland & Co., 1991.
Box 611, Jefferson, NC 28640
900 pages—\$75.00.

Obviously designed for someone other than the casual reader, this fine new McFarland release really delivers the goods to the tune of just under 1000 pages. Writer Dennis Fischer takes no short cuts in chronicling the careers of 99 horror movie directors of the sound era, applying his impressive expertise on artists ranging from James Whale to David Lynch. This is

about as definitive a book as we are likely to get on the subject for a good, long while.

The tome is attractively arranged: 51 of Fischer's "big guns" are accorded chapter-length treatments with complete filmographies and biographical information; the remaining subjects are relegated to "The Hopeless and the Hopeful" section with only slightly skimpy coverage. Each director's contributions to the genre are examined in some depth, no small accomplishment considering the staggering number of films involved, and Fischer writes with enough detail and perception to assure the reader that he's actually seen all of them, which is not always the case in many film books of this scope.

Chapters on contemporary directors benefit from having a greater share of original research and, in the cases of Curtis Harrington, Joe Dante, the late Reginald LeBorg, and several others, the author has secured first-hand interviews. Fischer proves to be an insightful if somewhat plodding commentator with an unfortunate penchant for long-winded plot synopses, which could easily have been pruned to make this a more affordable volume. His opinions are well-articulated but remain stubbornly non-controversial, rarely straying from the popular consensus (one wishes he would have taken the opportunity to topple the inflated reputations of such questionable talents as Wes Craven,

Sean Cunningham, John Carpenter, and other splatter-school graduates).

But these are petty criticisms for such a large-scale work. *Horror Film Directors* is a topnotch movie reference book by any standard and a sound investment for serious-minded film buffs.

—MB

THE ULTIMATE FRANKENSTEIN

Byron Preiss, Editor
Dell Publishing, 1991.
327 pages—\$10.00.

Edited by Byron Preiss, *The Ultimate Frankenstein* offers 19 stories and a filmography dealing with the Frankenstein legend. It's interesting to read the various interpretations of Mary Shelley's masterpiece by. Some, like Philip José Farmer "Evil, Be My God", completely rewrite the legend by suggesting that the Frankenstein story actually occurred, with Shelley basing her work on a true tale.

In "Dreams", Paul Wilson inventively tells what it's like to be an artificially created person, from the point of view of a woman who found herself having strange dreams about being trapped inside the body of a man.

"The Creature on the Couch", by Michael Bishop, is one of my favorites. It relates the story of a therapist whose patient turns out to be none other than the

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monster himself. Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.'s "Fortitude", Mike Resnick's "Monsters of the Midway", and Esther M. Friesner's "Mad at the Academy" are extremely funny interpretations of the legend. Also worth noting is David J. Schow's "Last Call for the Sons of Shock".

If you want something scary and funny to while away the time, I highly recommend *The Ultimate Frankenstein*.

—Sean Farrell

THE ULTIMATE DRACULA

Byron Preiss, Editor
Dell Publishing, 1991.
358 pages—\$13.00.

Since the publication of Bram Stoker's novel, the name "Dracula" has come to represent undying terror. In *The Ultimate Dracula*, a collection of short stories based on Stoker's character, Dracula takes on a vast range of incarnations, from Vlad the Impaler to teenaged Neville; from little Sylvia Frances of Romania to sleazy Mr. Lucrada; from Bela Lugosi to Ceaucescu; from an 18th-century aristocrat to a punk rocker. Movie buffs will especially appreciate those stories with a cinematic slant, as well as the representative list of vampire movies that concludes the book.

To pick a favorite from these stories is difficult. The rewards to be found are many: the interplay of eras in Kevin J.

Anderson's "Much at Stake", the deft treatment of a fairly traditional Gothic story in Anne Rice's "The Master of Rampling Gate", the horror of post-revolutionary Romania in Dan Simmons' "All Dracula's Children", the deserving writer in Heather Graham's "The Vampire in His Closet". (One quibble, probably brought about by reading too many of these wonderful stories at one sitting: although the reality of AIDS is naturally reflected in some of the contemporary stories, eventually its stunning impact diminished and I was left with concern for the possible trivializing of a tragic epidemic by associating it with a fictional nightmare.)

Note: As I flipped through the book during the course of writing this review, I frequently found myself caught up in one or another of these marvelous stories, happily revisiting the characters and tales.

—Sally Jane Gellert

THE ULTIMATE WEREWOLF

Byron Preiss, Editor
Dell Publishing, 1991.
359 pages—\$10.00

The Ultimate Werewolf, like its companion volumes, strikes me as being a sizeable distance from *Ultimate*—more in the neighborhood of *Moderate*, south of *Selective*. Nevertheless, it's a mostly well-written collection of stories with which to

spend a moonlit night or two, and the publishers are to be commended for having Michael David Biegel provide illustrations for each tale/tail. (I miss the days when illustrations were part and parcel of a new book.) Among the stories I most enjoyed are Kim Antieau's "The Mark of the Beast", in which M. Garnier's young guest becomes enthralled by Garnier's beautiful werewolf wife; Jerome Charyn's "At War with the Wolf Man", a big-city exposé of a lycanthropic serial killer; Craig Shaw Gardner's "Day of the Wolf", with its clever twist on the standard legend; and Nancy A. Collins' "Raymond", which, happily for this edition of *Scarlet Street*, has a sideshow as its primary setting. Less fun were Nina Kiriki Hoffman's "Unleashed" and Harlan Ellison's "Adrift Just Off the Islets of Langerhans: Latitude 38° 54' N Longitude 77° 00' 13" W", the latter displaying all the economy of its title. Ellison's introduction, however, is enjoyable and surprisingly unpretentious; appropriately, most of it is in homage to Lon Chaney, Jr. The volume concludes with a selected filmography by (also appropriately) Leonard Wolf. Included are mini-reviews of Universal's *WEREWOLF OF LONDON* (1935) and *THE WOLF MAN* (1941), and Fox's *THE UNDYING MONSTER* (1942), among others.

The Ultimate Werewolf is, as noted, a pleasant enough diversion, but true fans of

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our furry friend are herewith directed to Guy Endore's 1933 novel *The Werewolf of Paris* (from which sprang Hammer's classic *CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF* in 1960) and the indispensable Saki's "Gabriel-Ernest", a wicked short story from the 1910 collection *Reginald in Russia*.

—RV

**A HEART AT FIRE'S CENTER:
THE LIFE AND MUSIC
OF BERNARD HERRMANN**

Steven C. Smith

University of California Press, 1991.
415 pages—\$29.95.

Bernard Herrmann (1911–1975) was one of the giants of film music. At last, there is a book that attempts to describe a man who composed some of the greatest film scores ever written as well as symphonic pieces and radio and TV scores. (For Orson Welles' *MERCURY THEATRE* on radio, he wrote the rinky-dink band music interrupted by the "news broadcasts" of the Martian invasion; for television, the *TWILIGHT ZONE* theme).

Stephen C. Smith knows both his subjects: he has a thorough understanding and appreciation of music, and clearly knows a great deal about Herrmann. He is not just a fan singing the praises of a master; he acknowledges that Herrmann was difficult, and had an explosive temper and a strong

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NEWS

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In Carole Nelson Douglas' third Irene Adler mystery, *Irene at Large*, the woman observes a stranger in Oriental garb fall at the feet of Nell Huxley, Irene's very proper friend and narrator. Despite his garb, he's an Englishman, and he reveals as he recovers that he has returned after years in Afghanistan in order to warn a man known only as Dr. Watson that the doctor's life is in danger. Nell's heart is completely lost to him, but after a shot through a window he vanishes. Irene vows to find him, for Nell should not be loved and left. Their search takes them first to a Parisian garret, inhabited only by a dead Lascar and an indecently large cobra. Although Irene dispatches this scaly miscreant with her revolver, the game is indeed a slither. The sinuous chase leads to a performance for the Empress of all the Russias, wriggles onto a channel steamer and under the desk of Dr. John H. Watson, slinks into the rooms of 221B Baker Street, and uncoils dark deeds both past and present.

Nelson's two previous Irene Adler mysteries, *Good Night, Mr. Holmes* and *Good Morning, Irene* met with considerable cheers from fans of the only woman who ever got the better of Sherlock Holmes. *Irene at Large* is due this summer from Tor Books.

—Richard Valley

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Evil Ed



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Harryhausen for a Charles H. Schneer Production.



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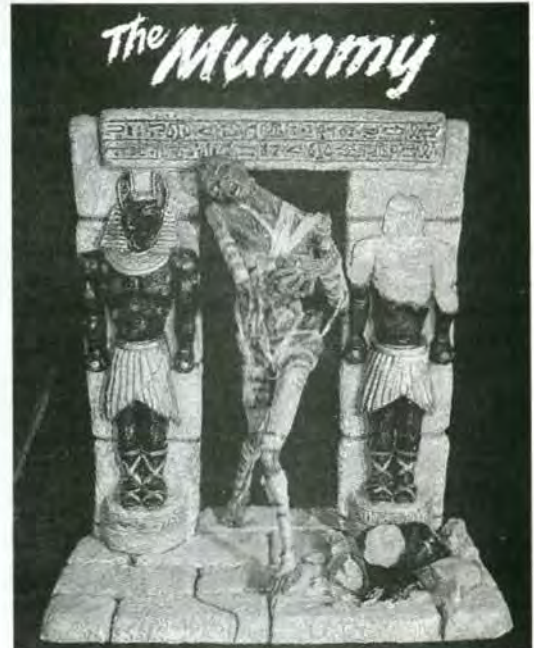
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belief in what was right for a soundtrack.
(He was usually proven correct.) Her-
mann's reaction to Brian DePalma, direc-
tor of the film *SISTERS* (1972), is classic:
"You are not Hitchcock!"

Smith and his fellow interviewers
(among them Craig Reardon, makeup man
for 1983's *TWILIGHT ZONE: THE MOVIE*)
spoke with actors, composers, friends, and
family to create this well-rounded portrait
of Herrmann. Smith also explores why the
scores work musically, describing their
construction in such marvelous detail that
you can practically hear the music. The ap-
pendix, which alone is worth the price of
the book, lists Herrmann's filmography, con-
cert works (including one of my favorites,
"Moby Dick"), TV and radio scores, and
recordings conducted by the composer.
This is a book that belongs on the shelf of
anyone interested in both film music and a
fascinating, contradictory creative soul.

Note: The title of this book refers to a
line of poetry, carried by Herrmann in his
pocket, that seems to encapsulate the com-
poser himself.

—Kevin G. Shinnick

HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN: THE ORIGINAL 1944 SHOOTING SCRIPT

Edward T. Lowe; edited by Philip J.
Riley.

MagiImage Filmbooks; 1990
196 Pages—\$19.95.

It was a bright day for genre fans
when it was announced that MagiImage
Filmbooks was to release its series of
Universal's horror-film shooting scripts.
Volume Six in that series, *House of Frank-
enstein*, offers an especially interesting
package. Besides boasting excellent pro-
duction-history notes and interviews, the
script itself sheds some light on a few am-
biguous moments in the finished film by
indicating where some sequences were in-
tended to be a little more rich in detail.

House of Frankenstein was the sixth
in Universal's *Frankenstein* series, which,
by this time, featured the famous "monster
rallies", throwing together the studio's Big
Three: Dracula, the Wolf Man, and the
Monster. To thread these plot elements to-
gether, some new characters were intro-

duced. Two of them are represented here
in interviews with Peter Coe, who por-
trayed Carl Huxman, the male romantic
lead in the Dracula half of the film, and
Elena Verdugo, who played Ilonka the
gypsy girl, the Wolf Man's love interest.
Gregory Mank's production history is ex-
cellent, in keeping with a past output in-
cluding *It's Alive*, a chronicle of the entire
Frankenstein series.

Of particular interest are glimpses of
the assistant director's daily report, repro-
ductions of sheet music from Hans J.
Salter's original score, and a memo from
Joseph Breen, listing scenes in which his
office "suggests" the violence be toned
down. The studio's awareness of the
watchful eye of the Breen office is appar-
ent in the script itself, as scenes describing
gruesome goings-on carry an assurance of
careful camera angles.

Add to this some locations stills, rare
behind-the-scenes photos, casting budget,
the complex pressbook, and studio public-
ity, and you have another addition to this
series that is well worth the \$19.95 price tag.

—Richard Scrivani

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THE BAT

THE BAT (1926) Jack Pickford, Louise Fazenda, Eddie Cribbon. One of the great silent horror films. A maniacal killer dressed in a weird, bat-like costume terrorizes a group of people in a shuddery, spooky old house riddled with secret passageways. The use of miniatures and the overall cinematography is stunning for its day. An officially 'lost' film for many years, this silent classic is now on video for the first time. From 35mm. \$T32

SAMSON AND THE 7 MIRACLES OF THE WORLD (1962) Gordon Scott, Yoko Tani. Considered by many to be one of the great sword and sandal pictures of the 1960s. Samson fights against a murdering horde of Tartar warriors while trying to save the life of a beautiful Chinese princess. A terrific climax in which Samson causes an earthquake while digging his way out of a mountain he was buried alive in. Great fun. Originally released here by A.L.P. In color. From 16mm. \$559



AN ANGEL FOR SATAN (1966) Barbara Steele, Anthony Steffen. Barbara has a dual role in this excellent horror film about a woman possessed by the spirit of a statue. Her strong performance helps to enhance the dreamily melancholic atmosphere of the house and its grounds, overshadowed by the mysterious lake. This was Barbara's last major, Italian horror film. There have been a few really awful video copies of this floating around with low sound. Ours is the best by far. In Italian with no subtitles. \$509

CREATION OF THE HUMANOIDS (1962) Don Megowan, Frances McCann, Erica Elliot. An entertaining sci-fi adventure about futuristic bigamy against a race of nearly perfect humanoids. This bizarre plot deals with a scientist who attempts to transfuse human blood into man-like robots with the hopes of making them fertile. Intelligent, thoughtful sci-fi that was way ahead of its time. Beautiful color. From 16mm. \$151

JOHN DICKSON CARR



THE BURNING COURT (1962) Nadja Tiller, Jean-Claude Brialy, Edith Scob. A strange film that deals with a number of weird subjects, including occultism, possession, family curses, etc. There's even a disappearing, reappearing body. An unusual, and very interesting foreign horror opus, dubbed into English. Based on a story by John Dickson Carr. From 16mm H162

SHERLOCK HOLMES AND THE DEADLY NECKLACE (1962) Christopher Lee, Santa Berger, Thorley Walters. It's Holmes and Watson against Moriarty once again as the evil doctor goes after a valuable necklace. This is a well polished German production that was put together by many of the principal folks from England's Hammer studios, including director Terrence Fisher. From 16mm SH15

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THE FLESH EATERS (1962) Martin Kosleck, Byron Sanders, Rita Morly. COMPLETELY UNCUT. One of the greatest low budget black & white shockers of all time. A mad, ex-Nazi scientist breeds a strain of flesh devouring bacteria on a desert island, using victims of a shipwreck as his guinea pigs. Some of the gruesome special effects are amazing. This is not one to show your young children, yet not really a gore film. An astonishing climax that still packs a jolt. Color sequence intact. Not to be missed! From 35mm. \$152

THE TERROR (1936) Wilfred Lawson, Bernard Lee, Arthur Wontner. Try to find this one in your reference books. A rare British horror chiller from the pen of Edgar Wallace. A creepy, old guesthouse holds the key to a hidden treasure that's surrounded by mystery, murder, and horror. Lee went on to play 'M' in the James Bond films of the 60s and 70s. H121





BLOOD FIEND (1966 aka **THEATRE OF DEATH**) Christopher Lee, Julian Glover, Jenny Till. Are there vampires on the loose in Paris? The local police are stymied by a series of 'blood' related murders. The mystery seems to center around a Grand Guignol stage sensation, a beautiful young actress who seems to be in a hypnotic trance. Unquestionably one of Lee's better low budget shockers. From 16mm. H155



SWORD AND THE DRAGON (1956) Boris Andreiev, Natalie Medvedeva. A wonderful Russian fantasy. A legendary warrior, Ilya Mourometz leads a life of fantastic adventures. He fights to save his people from an assortment of horrible monsters including a 3-headed dragon, a wind demon, and other legendary creatures. One scene features a mountain of living men. From the director of **MAGIC VOYAGE OF SINBAD**. In color. From 16mm. \$557



ATOMIC SUBMARINE (1960) Dick Foran, Brett Halsey, Arthur Franz, Tom Conway, Bob Steele. A U.S. atomic sub heads for the north pole to investigate a series of oceanic disasters. There it discovers an underwater flying saucer piloted by an alien monster intent on conquering the world. This is another one of those lovable, black & white, drive-in schlockers. From 16mm. \$150

COOL KID ON A HOT CAR!



TEENAGE CRIME WAVE (1955) Tommy Cook, Mollie McCart, Sue England. Jail, catfights, murder, kidnapping, and much more are all shoved into this J.D. schlocker from Columbia Pictures. Former child star Cook plays a vicious hood in this teenage variation on the Bonnie and Clyde theme. From the folks that gave us **EARTH VS. THE FLYING SAUCERS** and **20 MILLION MILES TO EARTH**. Great fun. From 16mm. J518



GUNS DON'T ARGUE (1957) Myron Healey, Jim Davis, Richard Crane. If you liked **MA BARKER'S KILLER BROOD** you'll definitely want to see this schlocker about the rise and fall of America's most famous criminals. Dillinger is played by Healey. Crane plays Johnny Van Meter. Ma Barker is a little on the geeky side. Bonnie & Clyde, Pretty Boy Floyd, and Baby Face Nelson are also featured. Very entertaining with almost non stop action. From 16mm. M208



NIGHT THEY KILLED RASPUTIN (1962) John Drew Barrymore, Edmund Purdom, Gianna Canale. An atmospheric retelling of the rise and fall of Rasputin, who's seemingly supernatural powers made the czar into a hypnotic slave. Barrymore reprises the role his father played in **RASPUTIN AND THE EMPRESS**. A bizarre film. From 16mm. H163

PLANETA BURG (1962) Vladimir Temejanov, Gennadi Vernov. A foreign sci-fi masterpiece! Cosmonauts land on Venus to find themselves in peril by various alien monstrosities. This appears to be the actual print that Roger Corman used to make parts of the negatives to **VOYAGE TO THE PREHISTORIC PLANET** and **VOYAGE TO THE PLANET OF PREHISTORIC WOMEN**. (the film cans are addressed to Roger). Visually stunning. In Russian, subtitled in English. From a beautiful 35mm print. \$155



SAMURAI (1945) Paul Fung, Luke Chan, David Chow. This is one of those awe-inspiring, mind boggling pieces of bad cinema that leaves your mouth hanging open in amazement. A hilarious spy-exploitation film about a Japanese orphan, raised in America, who turns traitor and helps plot the invasion of California. So corny its unbelievable. Ed Wood would've loved it. From 16mm. SP01

GLADIATORS SEVEN (1962) Richard Harrison, Livio Lorenzon. An Italian gladiator epic with a dash of humor thrown in for good measure. Story concerns a Spartan warrior who leads a group of gladiators that have vowed to free Sparta from its Tyrant ruler. Lots of swordplay, arena thrills, and the usual ripping biceps. Originally released in the U.S. by MGM. In color. From 16mm. \$560

LOINLESS OF THE LONG DISTANCE RUNNER (1962) Tom Courtenay, Michael Redgrave. A critically acclaimed film. A young hoodlum ends up in reform school where it's discovered he has tremendous running ability. He's then groomed for a foot race by a local governor. During the race, a series of flashbacks reconstructs the young juvenile's life. Compelling performances by all in this superb, well scripted drama. Not your usual Sinister Cinema schlock. Outstanding! From 16mm. J521



THE FEMALE BUNCH (1969) Lon Chaney, Russ Tamblyn, Regina Carol. Director Al Adamson decided to shoot this at the Charlie Manson ranch so he could get just the right atmosphere. Exploitation sleaze about a gang of man-hating women. Lon plays a drug pusher in his last released film. You just can't get much more low budget than this. Psychotronic from start to finish. From 35mm. X056

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SCIENCE FICTION

ROCKETSHIP (1936) Buster Crabbe, Jean Rogers, Charles Middleton. The first screen version about Flash Gordon and his adventures on the planet Mongo. Still great fun. Feature condensation from the classic serial. \$148

METEOR MONSTER (1957, aka **TEENAGE MONSTER**) Anne Gwynne, Gilbert Perkins, Gloria Costello. A teenage boy is exposed to weird radiation from a fallen meteor. He slowly transforms into a hairy, murdering monster. \$149

QUATERMASS 2 (1957) Brian Donlevy, Michael Ripper, Sidney James. One of the best British science fiction films ever made. A British moon rocket scientist discovers a secret factory being used by invading aliens as a central base in their plot to conquer the Earth. Outstanding! \$132

ATOMIC SUBMARINE (1960) Dick Foran, Brett Halsey, Arthur Franz, Tom Conway, Bob Steele. A U.S. atomic sub heads for the north pole to investigate a series of oceanic disasters. There it discovers an underwater flying saucer piloted by an alien monster intent on conquering the world. \$150

CREATION OF THE HUMANOID (1962) Don Megowan, Frances McCann, Eric Elliot. A scientist attempts to transfuse human blood into man-like robots in the hopes of making them fertile. An entertaining sci-fi adventure about futuristic bigotry against a race of nearly perfect humanoids. \$151

THE FLESH EATERS (1962) Martin Kosleck, Byron Sanders, Rita Morley. COMPLETELY UNCUT. One of the great low budget shockers of all time. A mad, ex-Nazi scientist breeds a strain of flesh devouring bacteria on a desert island, using shipwrecked Americans as his guinea pigs. An incredible climax. Color sequence intact. Not to be missed! \$152

INVISIBLE DR. MABUSE (1962 aka **THE INVISIBLE HORROR**) Lex Barker, Karin Dor, Wolfgang Preiss. This could very well be the best of the German Mabuse films of the 60s. Our Maniacal doctor is plotting against humanity once again, this time armed with a formula for invisibility. \$153

INVASION OF THE ANIMAL PEOPLE (1962) John Carradine, Robert Burton, Barbara Wilson. A re-release of one of our old standards that was accidentally left out of the catalog last year. Aliens land in Lapland and deposit a giant, furry monster that creates havoc with the local natives. \$154

TESTAMENT OF DR. MABUSE (1962 aka **TERROR OF THE MAD DOCTOR**) Gert Frobe, Wolfgang Preiss, Senta Berger. A well done remake of Lang's 1933 classic. The head of an asylum is controlled by the spirit of the dead, evil genius, Dr. Mabuse who had hypnotized him. \$155

PLANETA BURQ (1962) Vladimir Temeljanov, Gennadi Vernov. A foreign sci-fi masterpiece! Cosmonauts land on Venus to find themselves in peril by various alien monstrosities. In Russian, subtitled in English. \$156

PLANET OF BLOOD (1966) Basil Rathbone, John Saxon, Dennis Hopper, Florence Marly. An expedition to Mars finds a crashed alien space ship. They bring back the only survivor, a green skinned, glowing eyed, bloodsucking, female alien who preys on the crew members. Color. \$157

HORROR

THE BAT (1926) Jack Pickford, Louise Fazenda, Eddie Cribben. One of the great silent horror films. A maniacal killer dressed in a weird, bat-like costume terrorized a group of people in a shuddery, spooky old house riddled with secret passageways. \$T32



THE TERROR (1936) Wilfred Lawson, Bernard Lee, Arthur Wontner. A rare British horror chiller from the pen of Edgar Wallace. A creepy, old guest-house holds the key to a hidden treasure. \$121

THE BURNING COURT (1962) Nadja Tiller, Jean-Claude Brialy, Edith Scob. A strange film about occultism, possession, family curses, etc. There's even a disappearing, reappearing body. \$162

NIGHT THEY KILLED RASPUTIN (1962) John Drew Barrymore, Edmund Purdom, Gianni Canale. An atmospheric retelling of the rise and fall of Rasputin, who's seemingly supernatural powers made the czarina into a hypnotic slave. \$163

BRING ME THE VAMPIRE (1964) Maria San Martin, Hector Godoy. A group of people are summoned to 'Black Castle' in the hopes of inheriting a fortune. While there, they're confronted by various, vampiric horrors. \$164

BLOOD THIRST (1965) Robert Winston, Yvonne Nelson. An obscure monster movie about a strange woman who retains youth via ritual killings and weird experiments. \$164

BLOOD FIEND (1966 aka **THEATRE OF DEATH**) Christopher Lee, Julian Glover. Are there vampires loose? Paris police are mystified by a series of 'blood' related murders. \$165

VAMPIRE PEOPLE (1966 aka **THE BLOOD DRINKERS**) Ronald Remy, Ed Fernandez. A mad nobleman and his vampiric helpers terrify a small town until the villagers turn against them. An eerie combination of color and sepias tones. \$166

AN ANGEL FOR SATAN (1966) Barbara Steele, Anthony Steffen. Barbara has a dual role in this excellent horror film about a woman possessed by the spirit of a statue. In Italian, no subtitles. \$509

TRACK OF THE VAMPIRE (1966) William Campbell, Sandra Knight, Jonathan Haze, Marissa Mathes. A Roger Corman production about a mad artist who believes he's the reincarnation of his vampiric ancestor. He dips his victims into molten wax, then paints them. \$167

CIRCUS OF FEAR (1966) Christopher Lee, Klaus Kinski. A well done British horror dealing with a series of bizarre circus killings that Scotland Yard is hard pressed to solve. \$168

THE BLOOD SUCKERS (1971) Peter Cushing, Patrick Macnee. Vampires are running rampant on the Greek island of Hydra. A must for Cushing fans. \$169

SWORD AND SANDAL

SWORD AND THE DRAGON (1956) Boris Andreyev, Natalie Medvedeva. A wonderful Russian fantasy. A legendary warrior fights to save his people from an assortment of horrible monsters including a 3-headed dragon. \$557

THE HELLFIRE CLUB (in color!) (1961) Peter Cushing, Keith Mitchell, Adrienne Cori. Exciting action with plenty of sword play as a forgotten British noble returns to claim his title and finds himself pitted against the infamous 'Hellfire Club'. \$558

SAMSON AND THE 7 MIRACLES OF THE WORLD (1962) Gordon Scott, Yoko Tani. Considered by many to be one of the great sword and sandal pictures. Samson fights against the Tartars while trying to save a Chinese princess. \$559

GLADIATORS SEVEN (1962) Richard Harrison, Livio Lorenzon. A Spartan warrior leads a group of gladiators who have vowed to free Sparta from its Tyrant ruler. Lots of swordplay. \$560

GUNS OF THE BLACK WITCH (1962) Don Megowan, Silvana Pampanini. Two boys escape from Spanish tyranny. Later they join up with pirates and set out for vengeance. \$561

SWORD OF EL CID (1962) Roland Carey, Sandro Morelli. An adventure thriller about two counts who face the wrath of the Cid because of brutality to his daughters. \$562

SILENT THRILLS

THE RAVEN (1915) Henry B. Walthall, Warda Howard. Based on the life of Edgar Allan Poe with many strange dream and fantasy elements thrown in for good measure. \$T28

MARK OF ZORRO (1920) Douglas Fairbanks, Noah Beery. An absolute classic. Zorro harasses the Spanish invaders and carves his initials whenever he strikes. This made Fairbanks a star. \$T29

DR. MABUSE, GAMBLER (1922) Rudolf Klein-Rogge, Gertrude Weicker. Director Fritz Lang weaves a Baroque tale about the master criminal Mabuse, who gambles with lives and fate. Masterful. \$T11

THIEF OF BAGDAD (1924) Douglas Fairbanks, Anna May Wong. A beautifully shot silent masterpiece. Doug goes on a magic quest filled with danger and adventure. Knockout sets by W. Cameron Menzies. A classic. \$T30

ELITA (1924, aka **REVOLT OF THE ROBOTS**) Yulia Soltseva, Nikolai Batalov. A group of Earthmen arrive on Mars to find a fantastic civilization in this classic Russian space epic. Original Russian version with no English title cards. \$T31

THE BAT (1926) Jack Pickford, Louise Fazenda, Eddie Cribben. One of the great silent horror films. A maniacal killer dressed in a weird, bat-like costume terrorized a group of people in a shuddery, spooky old house riddled with secret passageways. \$T32



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EXPLOITATION MINI-CLASSICS, VOL. TWO. Another hilarious compilation of exploitation shorts guaranteed to induce yucks. "How to Hold a Husband," "Senior Prom," "Goldie Locks Goes Glamorous," and several others are featured. X057

BABES OF BURLESQUE, VOL. ONE. No real nudity here, but lots of G-string and pasties are featured in this collection of burlesque dancing featurettes. X046

BABES OF BURLESQUE, VOL. TWO. More classic burlesque soundtracks from the 30s and 40s. X047

BABES OF BURLESQUE, VOL. THREE. Lots more of those simply clad big, bad, burlesque babes. X048

BABES OF BURLESQUE, VOL. FOUR. More of those hefty hoopers dancing their way into your hearts. X049

WRESTLING SWEAT BABES, VOL. ONE. This tape will leave you in hysterics. Two Amos n' Andy imitators do the play by play in these old, female wrestling films from the 50s. Also featured are clips of Gloria Verano and the Golden Ruby from their Mexican wrestling films. X050

WRESTLING SWEAT BABES, VOL. TWO. More clips of Gloria and Ruby together with more of those hilarious female wrestling shorts hosted by Amos n' Andy imitators. X051



THE FLESH MERCHANT (1955) Joy Reynolds, Guy Manford, Geri Moffatt. Young girls are led into a life of shame by organized vice lords. "A true story that rocked the nation!" This movie's hysterical. From Don Sonney. A.K.A. Wild and Wicked. X052

NAKED IN THE NIGHT (1958) Eva Bartok, Alexander Kerst. Just what you've always wanted to see...a dubbed into English German exploitation quickie about the evils of loose women. Won't they ever learn. X053

MOONSHINE MOUNTAIN (1965) Chuck Scott, Adam Sord. Who would've ever thought Herschell Gordon Lewis would direct a rip-roarin' hillbilly exploitation movie. Feuds, stiffs, and lots of combat excitement. A real yuckster. X054

THE FEMALE BUNCH (1969) Lon Chaney, Russ Tamblyn, Regina Carroll. Shot at the Manson ranch for atmosphere. Exploitation sleaze about a gang of men-hating women. Lon plays a drug pusher. X056

JUVENILE SCHLOCK

TEENAGE CRIME WAVE (1955) Tommy Cook, Moille McCart, Sue England. Jail, calligths, murder, kidnapping, and much more are all shoved into this J.D. schlocker from Columbia Pictures. Great fun. J518



WILD YOUTH (1961) Robert Arthur, Robert Hutton, Carol Ohmart. An interesting J.D. opus about a wild pack of kids that fight over a doll filled with heroin. Ohmart plays an drug addict-gun moll. J519

WILD ONES ON WHEELS (1962) Francine York, Robert Blair, Ray Dennis Steckler. A sports car gang murders an ex-con and forces his wife to locate \$240,000 he had buried in the desert. J520

LONGINESS OF THE LONG DISTANCE RUNNER (1962) Tom Courtenay, Michael Redgrave. A critically acclaimed film. A young hoodlum ends up in reform school where it's discovered he has tremendous running ability. He's then groomed for races by a local governor. Outstanding! J521

MYSTERY-SUSPENSE-FILM NOIR

MOTORCYCLE SQUAD (1937) Kane Richmond, Wynne Gibson. Grade 'B' thriller as a policeman is dishonorably discharged so he can get 'inside' a gang of crooks. M209

SEA RACKETEERS (1937) Weldon Heyburn, Jeanne Madden. Two buddies break up a gang of ruthless fur smugglers. M024

I TAKE THIS OATH (1940, aka **ROOKIE COP**) Gordon Jones. The first film released under the PRC banner, (changed from PDC). A young policeman seeks to avenge his father's death. M201

EMERGENCY LANDING (1941, aka **ROBOT PILOT**) Forest Tucker, Carol Hughes. Early PRC aviation thriller with Forest as the hero. M122



CLUB HAVANNA (1945) Tom Neal, Margaret Lindsay. This Edgar G. Ulmer effort revolves around the lives of the people who come into the Club Havana finding love and death. Kind of a PRC version of **GRAND HOTEL**. A must for all Ulmer fans. M202

DETOUR (1945) Tom Neal, Ann Savage. A film noir classic. A down on his luck musician thumbs a ride that leads him to scandal and death. Savage is priceless. M062

HUE AND CRY (1947) Alastair Sim, Valerie White. Well done British thriller about a shy mystery writer who gets involved with boys playing hide and seek with real crooks. M068

DEAR MURDERER (1947) Eric Portman, Greta Gynt, Dennis Price, Maxwell Reed, Hazel Court. Big name British cast sparkles in this fine thriller about a jealous husband who tries to commit the 'perfect crime' when he murders his wife's lover. M203

OPEN SECRET (1948) John Ireland, Jane Randolph, Sheldon Leonard. A young couple thwarts the attempts of a gang of hoodlums to wage an anti-semitic campaign. Nifty film noir. M204

TOO LATE FOR TEARS (1949, aka **KILLER BAIT**) Elizabeth Scott, Don DeLoe, Arthur Kennedy. Great film noir about a greedy woman's involvement with gangsters, blackmail, and murder. M149

WAGES OF FEAR (1952) Yves Montand, Charles Vanel, Peter Van Eyck. A marvelous adventure thriller about four men involved in the long distance driving of trucks filled with nitroglycerin. Part English, part French with English subtitles. M205

STOLEN IDENTITY (1953) Francis Lederer, Thurman Bay, Joan Camden. A mystery thriller involving a Viennese taxi driver who impersonates an American visitor in order to aid the escape of his friends wife. Enjoyable and well done. M206

NORMAN CONQUEST (1953 aka **PARK PLAZA 605**) Tom Conway, Eva Bartok, Joy Shelton. Conway plays title character in this British mystery that finds him pitted against a Nazi baron who's involved with gem smuggling. M207

PROFILE (1954) John Bentley, Kathleen Byron. Good grade 'B' thriller involving a husband, his two-timing wife, and murder. M111

GUNS DON'T ARGUE (1957) Myron Healey, Jim Davis, Richard Crane. If you liked MA BARKER'S KILLER BROOD you'll definitely want to see this schlocker about the lives of famous criminals. Dillinger, Ma Barker, Bonnie & Clyde, many others. M208

SHERLOCK HOLMES

SHERLOCK HOLMES AND THE DEADLY NECKLACE (1962) Christopher Lee, Santa Berger, Thorley Walters. It's Holmes and Watson against Moriarty once again as the evil doctor goes after a valuable necklace. SH15

SCTV

DANGEROUS ASSIGNMENT (1952) Brian Donlevy. vol. 6, "The Atomic Mine" & "Pal and Mike" TV57

DANGEROUS ASSIGNMENT (1952) Brian Donlevy. vol. 15, "The Displaced Person" & "Italian Movie Story" TV58

DANGEROUS ASSIGNMENT (1952) Brian Donlevy. vol. 16, "Perfect Alibi" & "Paris Sewer" TV59

DANGEROUS ASSIGNMENT (1952) Brian Donlevy. vol. 17, "Assignment with Destiny" & "Civil War Map Story" TV60



EDGAR WALLACE

THE TERROR (1938) Wilfred Lawson, Bernard Lee, Arthur Wontner. A creepy old house is the setting in this British chiller about a hunt for hidden treasure. H121

THE STRANGE COUNTESS (1961) Joachim Fuchsberger, Brigitte Grothum. A girl is almost murdered, but no explainable motive can be found until a 20 year old murder is uncovered. EW01

DOOR WITH THE SEVEN LOCKS (1962) Klaus Kinski, Heinz Drach, Ady Berber. A remake of **CHAMBER OF HORRORS** (1940). It features murder, a torture chamber, and a treasure vault. EW02

SECRET OF THE BLACK TRUNK (1962) Joachim Hansen, Santa Berger, Peter Carsten. The chilling tale of a series of grisly murders at a famed English Hotel. Filmed in Great Britain. EW03

THE BLACK ABBOT (1963) Joachim Fuchsberger, Grit Bollschner. A black-hooded figure is seen disappearing into a ruined Abbey tower. The mystery leads to a mysterious castle filled with terror. EW04

THE SQUEAKER (1965) Heinz Drache, Eddie Rutting. The nameless shadow of the "squeaker" follows the lives of three horrified people who are to be his next victims. EW05

SPY THRILLERS

SAMURAI (1945) Paul Fung, Luke Chan. A hilarious spy-exploitation film about a Japanese orphan, raised in America, who turns traitor and helps plot the invasion of California. SP01

YOUR TURN DARLING (1963) Eddie Constantine. In this French espionage thriller Eddie once again plays the role that made him a star, Lemmy Cautious. Lots of two fisted action. SP02

LICENSE TO KILL (1964) Eddie Constantine, Daphne Dayle. Agent Nick Carter is called in when enemy agents attempt to steal a new secret weapon. SP03

IT MEANS THAT TO ME (1963) Eddie Constantine, Jean-Louis Richard, Rosita. Eddie (complete with trench coat) plays a down on his luck reporter who's set up on espionage charges by the government, then hired to transport top secret micro-film. SP04

THERE GOES BARDER (1964) Eddie Constantine, May Brit. Eddie plays a sleazy con-man who's hired by a shady ship owner to be a security agent. SP05



CIRCUS OF HORRORS

Credits

A Lynx Film released in 1960 by American International Pictures (U.S.) and Anglo Amalgamated Distributors (G.B.). A Julian Wintle-Leslie Parkyn production presented by Nat Cohen and Stuart Levy. Director: Sidney Hayers. Original screenplay: George Baxt. Associate Producer: Norman Priggen. Director of Photography: Douglas Slocombe. Music: Franz Reizenstein and Muir Mathieson. Song: "Look for a Star" by Mark Anthony. Sung by Garry Miles. Make-up: Trevor Crole-Rees. Film Editor: Reginald Mills. Art Director: Jack Shampian. Assistant Director: David Orton. Wardrobe: Vi Murray. Continuity: June Randall. Sound: Lionel Selwyn. Filmed with the cooperation of Billy Smart's Circus. In Eastman Color and Scope. Running time: 91 minutes.

Cast

Anton Diffing (Dr. Rossiter/Dr. Bernard Schuler), Erika Remberg (Elissa Caro), Yvonne Monlaur (Nicole), Donald Pleasence (Vanet), Jane Hylton (Angela Webb), Kenneth Griffith (Martin Webb), Conrad Phillips (Inspector Arthur Ames), Jack Gwillim (Supt. Andrews), Vanda Hudson (Magda), Yvonne Romain (Melina), Colette Wilde (Evelyn Morley), William Mervyn (Dr. Morley), John Merivale (Edward Finsbury), Carla Challoner (Nicole as a child), Peter Swanwick (Inspector Knopf), Walter Gotell (Von Gruber), Chris Christian (Ringmaster), Sasha Coco (Luis the clown), Jack Carson (Chief Eagle Eye), Glyn Houston (Barker), Malcom Watson (Elderly Man), Kenneth Warren and Fred Haggerty (Roustabouts).

Continued from page 29

CIRCUS OF HORRORS is a feminist's nightmare of a movie. Rossiter's ladies are gorgeous mannequins ripe for slaughter. Even the dignified Evelyn Morley, representing British society, is introduced in a hopelessly deranged state of mind, screeching hysterically in cheese-cake-calendar lingerie. Initially, the script goes to disturbing lengths to justify Rossiter's sadistic activities. It is painfully clear that Morley is responsible for her own mutilation; there's even a suggestion that she had a tryst with Rossiter. In fact, early in the film, Rossiter comes off as the misunderstood underdog, fleeing from a high-society lynch mob.

The film dotes distastefully on facial mutilations: even Rossiter has his face slashed to ribbons, not once, but twice. All that results from Rossiter's self-righteous sermonizing about creating beauty out of ugliness is a procession of peekaboo pin-up shots of circus glamour girls. In addition, CIRCUS OF HORRORS is not especially well-made. Footage of an actual circus audience is crudely spliced into the picture, but it rarely matches what's going on in the ring. When the ringmaster introduces an act to tumultuous applause, it's a sure bet that the film will cut to a crowd shot in which no one is clapping.

To the movie's credit, its rare attempts at subtlety are mildly impressive, such as the appearance of Luis, the clown, an enigmatic, mute character seen only in make-up. After Elissa's death, the camera tracks Luis to his dressing room; there he despondently picks up the girl's picture and tosses it aside as we glimpse a tear running down his cheek. It's a quiet, touching moment in a film in which quiet, touching moments are in short supply.

There's horror of another sort in the picture's theme song, a treacly, mood-wrecking pop tune that wouldn't seem out of place in a Gidget movie. It's worth mentioning only because it actually went on to become something of a hit. In June 1960, there were as many as four versions of "Look for a Star" on the charts, the most successful being the Garry Miles (a.k.a. Buzz Cason) original, released on Liberty Records, which climbed to 16th place.

CIRCUS OF HORRORS may not be any great shakes artistically, but it is an entertaining movie if viewed in the right frame of mind. Though mild by today's standards, it was considered adult fare when first released, and its taste of forbidden fruit still lingers. In *A Heritage of Horror* (Avon Books, 1973), David Pirie suggests that CIRCUS OF HORRORS, HORRORS OF THE BLACK MUSEUM, and PEEPING TOM (1960) form a trilogy of British horror movies that shied away from Hammer's literary/Gothic tradition to venture into the uncharted region of soft-core sadism. Pirie and others have made much—too much, in fact—of the picture's underlying theme of brutality and murder as a spectator sport, but a close look at the movie suggests that the theme is incidental at best, its

dime-store-novel plot too sketchy and too preoccupied with exploitation to be anything but a second-drawer shocker.

To its credit, CIRCUS OF HORRORS acquainted moviegoers of the late 50s with the flip side of the squeaky-clean, ungodly wholesomeness of Hollywood's circus extravaganzas (typified most nauseatingly by Cecil B. DeMille's *THE GREAT SHOW ON EARTH* in 1952). Despite its clumsiness and lack of wit, CIRCUS OF HORRORS unsettlingly conveys the seedy, perverse underbelly beneath the surface glitter of the big top.



Doc Rossiter (Anton Diffing) is scarred, chased, shot at, mauled by a gorilla, and run down by a car in the busy finale of 1960's CIRCUS OF HORRORS. Surrounding him: Superintendent Andrews (Jack Gwillim) and a chorus of bobbies.



Alan Levine P.O. Box 1577 Bloomfield, NJ 07003 (201) 743-5288

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PARTING SHOT

There's a sucker born every minute.

P. T. BARNUM

Oh, I keep forgetting, Gabelle. You're a—you're a humanitarian, aren't you? You think one person is as good as another—a naïve notion so contradicted by the facts.

W. P. LIPSCOMB AND S. N. BEHRMAN
A Tale of Two Cities
(novel by Charles Dickens)

Why, you're like those carnival joints I used to work in—big flash on the outside but on the inside nothing but filth.

CARL FOREMAN AND EDMUND H. NORTH
Young Man with a Horn

Two brothers who baffle science—side by side, the world's smallest giant and the world's largest midget!

W. C. FIELDS
You Can't Cheat an Honest Man

Nothing human disgusts me, Mr. Shannon—unless it's unkind or violent.

ANTHONY VEILLER AND JOHN HUSTON
The Night of the Iguana
(play by Tennessee Williams)

All you need to start an asylum is an empty room and the right kind of people.

ERIC HATCH AND MORRIE RYSKIND
My Man Godfrey

Some people are better off dead—like your wife and my father, for instance.

RAYMOND CHANDLER
AND CZENZI ORMONDE
Strangers on a Train

She hasn't any right to you. You're mine, and I'm hanging on to you. I committed murder to get you. Understand? Murder!

JERRY WALD AND RICHARD MACAULAY
They Drive by Night

I was so fascinated! To have someone working for me who had the courage to poison her husband.

GEORGE BAXT
The Greta Garbo Murder Case

You know, Watson, I don't mind confessing that I have always had an idea that I would have made a highly efficient criminal. This is the chance of my lifetime in that direction.

SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE
The Adventure of Charles Augustus Milverton

I'm doubtful about Shakespeare for the movies. . . . But MACBETH and its gloomy moors might be grand. A perfect cross between WÜTHERING HEIGHTS and THE BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN.

ORSON WELLES

Never meddle with play actors, for they're a favored race.

CERVANTES
Don Quixote

I wrote the story myself. It's all about a girl who lost her reputation but never missed it.

MAE WEST
The Wit and Wisdom of Mae West

What you do in this world is a matter of no consequence. The question is, what can you make people believe that you have done?

SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE
A Study in Scarlet

I was. . . ruminating what I should do, until a strange feeling crept over me that I should like—what? Blood!—raw blood, reeking and hot, bubbling and juicy, from the veins of some gasping victim.

JAMES MALCOLM RYMER
Varney the Vampire

Even the man who is pure in heart
And says his prayers by night
May become a wolf when the
wolf bane blooms
And the autumn moon is bright.

CURT SIODMAK AND GORDON KAHN
The Wolf Man

What elephant?

SIDNEY SHELDON
Billy Rose's Jumbo
(book by Hecht and MacArthur)

—Quotations compiled by
Sally Jane Gellert—

Send us your quotes! Please be sure to credit them properly. Then be sure to look for them in future issues.

Proving that you can burn a candle at both ends—not to mention a wax dummy of Marie Antoinette—Elizabeth Wassel found time to send in the correct answer to last issue's Mystery Photo Contest. That's right, it's our old fiend Vincent Price—the celebrated subject of an exclusive interview in our very next issue—chasing Phyllis Kirk down those foggy Manhattan byways in 1953's *HOUSE OF WAX*. Some of you complained that the photo was too easily identifiable; maybe so, but we'd received only one correct answer to the previous contest, and we wanted to see how many replies we'd get if the contest weren't quite so difficult. We got a lot. Now, let's see you guess a hard one.

Anyway, here's the new photo, and you won't find a single clue on this page to help you identify it. Correct entry with earliest postmark wins a one-year subscription.

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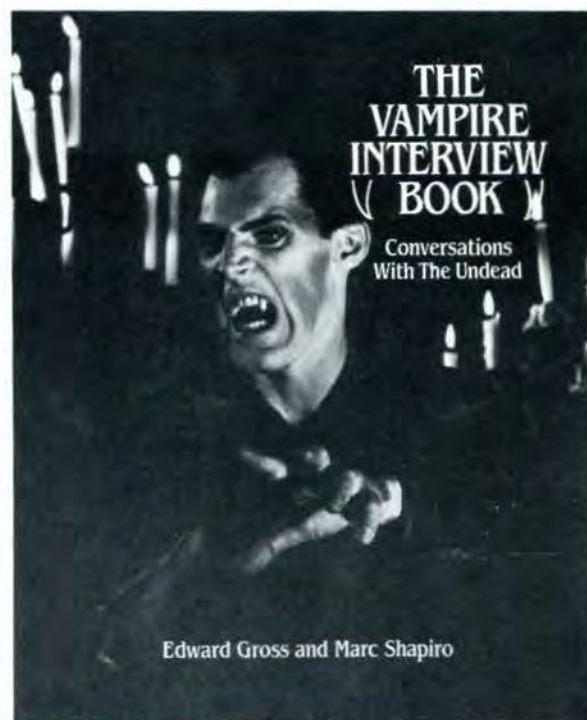
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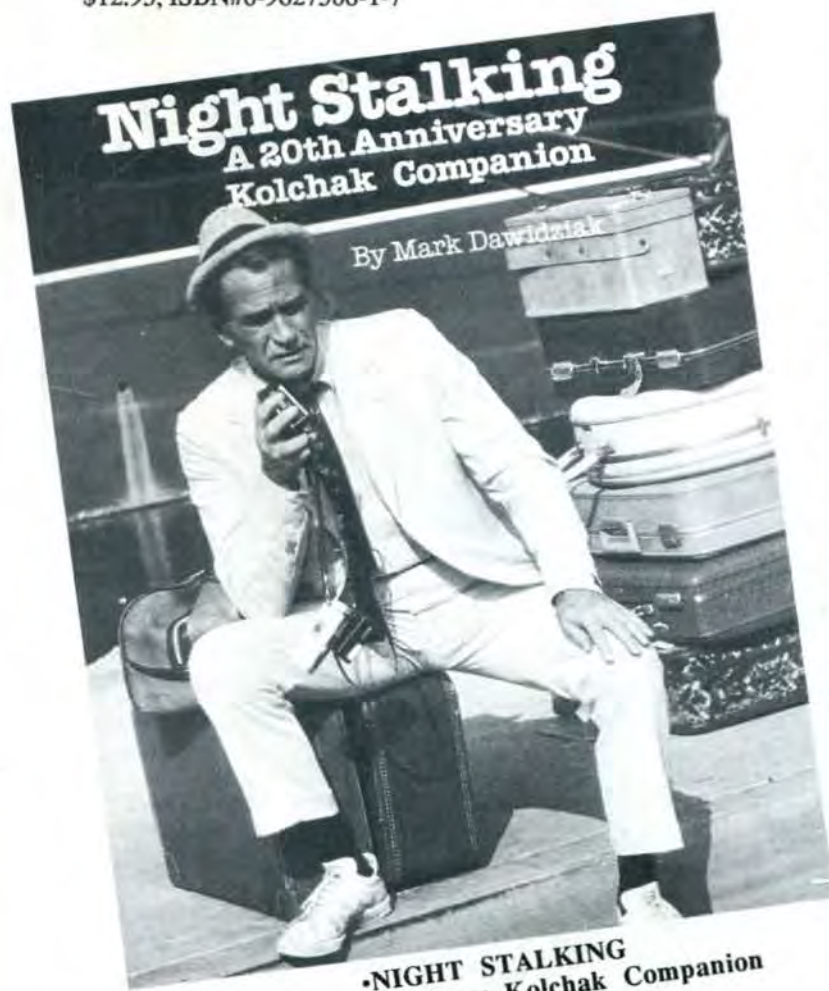
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